Trends in Buddhist Studies
Amongst Western Scholars

1990-2001

Vol. 19

Compiled by Michael S. Drummond

The Dependent Nature of the Phenomenal World[1]

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"According to Buddhism, the object of higher knowledge is not a higher reality, but the phenomenal world. This excludes the possibility of any metaphysical reality which serves as the ultimate ground of existence, no matter under what name it is introduced...". [2] These sentences were written by Professor Karunadasa in a paper in which he argues against those who think that "...Buddhism believes in a Self which is not identical with any of the constituents (*khandhas*) of the empiric individuality taken severally or collectively, but which transcends them at both levels."[3] Such a view, Professor Karunadasa suggests, is a result either of a misguided application of Vedāntic thought to Buddhist teachings or of a belief in a 'perennial philosophy based on the transcendental unity of all religions'. In this paper, I would like to show that though I wholeheartedly agree with Professor Karunadasa that 'according to Buddhism, the object of higher knowledge is not a higher reality, but the phenomenal world', I do not agree that it follows from such a statement that 'this excludes the possibility of any metaphysical reality which serves as the ultimate ground of existence'. And I would like to suggest that my standpoint is arrived at entirely from within the teachings of the Buddha himself[4], making no reference either to Vedānta or to any perennial philosophy.

In the paper from which I am quoting, Professor Karunadasa supports his view that the object of higher knowledge, according to the Buddha, is the phenomenal world with a consideration of various ambiguous passages in Pali material on self-hood, drawing on both the doctrine of *anattā* and the analysis of the person in terms of the *khanda*s. His focus on such passages was no doubt determined by the specific claims he was seeking to refute. In this paper I will show how I have arrived at the same view via a different, and also more comprehensive, route. My approach was initially suggested to me by some words of Professor Richard Gombrch. In his Louis H. Jordan seminar papers, Professor Gombrich said, in a discussion about the way early Buddhist meditative states are associated with cosmological levels, on the one hand..." surely these subjective states had some objective correlate?", and on the other hand "... the Buddha was not really interested in what existed 'out there'".[5] These two

quite different quotations illustrate the 'discussion' nature of Professor Gombrich's paper: he was drawing out and considering the diversity of some of the references to the subject in the canonical material rather than offering an interpretation. They also highlight an important subject about which there has been little or no clarity or consensus of interpretation: the nature of the phenomenal world. It is this that is the main theme of my paper. And I hope to show that if one follows this route, it not only becomes clear that it is the nature of the phenomenal world that is the object of higher knowledge, but that in the context of the most central teachings of the Buddha it is also implicit that there must actually be some metaphysical reality other than the phenomenal world.

In order to make these points, I will draw together for consideration the central orientation of the Buddha's teachings, taken as a whole; a look at how the term *loka* (world) is used in the relevant Pali material; and the metaphysical implications of the doctrines of *anattā/paṭiccasamuppāda* in this context.

First, then, the central orientation of the Buddha's teachings. What I want to do here is to present the teachings in such a way as to draw out what seems to me to be their notable person-centeredness. Furthermore, I particularly want to suggest that what is striking in this is that it is not that we are given a detailed anthropology, but that we are consistently directed towards a study of subjective (person -centrad) experience. In the last part of my paper, I will also suggest that understanding the person-centeredness of the teachings in this way is crucial if one is to understand their wider implications.

Given that there is no specific place where a discussion of the Buddha's teachings must begin, I shall start by referring to the way in which the Buddha responds to the classical ' unanswered questions'. This is an appropriate starting point for my paper for two reasons; not only are the first two of these questions concerned with my theme of the phenomenal world, but I would also suggest that the way the Buddha responds to them is an active clue to how he wanted his teachings to be approached. The classical unanswered questions are ; whether or not the universe is eternal, whether or not the universe is finite, whether or not that which is the vital principle (*jīva*) is different from the body (in effect this is a question about the soul), and whether after

death a *tathāgata* (and the implication is that it means any liberated being) exists or not , whether s/he exists and does not exist, or whether s/he neither exists nor does not exist. To these are added, in certain contexts, a large number of other questions in similar vein; focussing mainly on the world and the soul[6]. They are all very much the sorts of questions that are frequently asked of religious teachers, and, indeed, the sorts of questions that virtually all religious teachers other than the Buddha actually answer: most of the world's religions actively concern themselves with explaining the nature of the soul, its relationship with the body, its status after liberation, and the nature of the world.

It is well-known and often related that the Buddha repeatedly states that he will not answer these questions on the grounds that to do so would be irrelevant and/or misleading[7]. Indeed, this is why they are simply referred to as the 'unanswered' questions. What is less well-known and rarely related is that in some contexts where he gives no reply to the questions, he nevertheless goes on to state that what he does teach, and what the questioner should concern himself with instead of such questions, is the reality of the human experience of *dukkha*; its cause, the possibility of its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation[8]. It seems to me that what he is doing here is deliberately transferring attention away from objective questions about what things are to the understanding of the subjective experience of *saṃsāra*. And that it is subjectivity that is intended here is emphasized when the Buddha explicitly defines *dukkha* in terms of the *khandhas*[9]. As the *khandhas* (to which I will return) in effect constitute the earthly life of an individual, this clearly indicates that *dukkha* is not merely a descriptive term but is, rather, the intrinsic nature of the human experience. It is this subjective experience that is both the problem which needs solving, and the process which needs understanding.

And this is the clue. It seems to me that this epitomizes the Buddha's approach not just to the way he gives his teachings but to his own spiritual life also. We read in the texts that he embarked on his spiritual quest because the experience of being human was problematic; it was manifestly unsatisfactory. He wanted to understand both why this was the case and also how to change it for something better. It goes without saying that according to the perspective of his world view he also believed that the experience of being human would be repeated in a series of lives, and it was in order not to have these repeated unsatisfactory experiences that he sought to understand

their nature. In the religious milieu in which he lived in north India in the fifth century BCE the Buddha was not alone in such a quest. What makes him different from most of his contemporaries is that in solving the problem, and in teaching others how to achieve the same solution, he did not extend his frame of reference beyond subjective experience. Indeed, it is this very contrast that is exemplified in the questioning of him by so many others to which I am referring here, and in his refusal to answer those questions.

The canonical descriptions of the Buddha's Enlightenment also importantly indicate the consistency of the Buddha's concern with subjective experience. I am constantly surprised at the lack of scholarly interest in these descriptions - indeed, in their total absence from most academic books on Buddhism. My surprise is simply because they are so relevant to understanding what he subsequently taught[10]. His Enlightenment is described entirely in experiential terms. Specifically, he is able to understand why the experience of being human is unsatisfactory in the way that it is, and he realizes that in understanding it one can solve the problem of its continuity[11]. The texts describe the Buddha having three insights. First, he is able to see all his former lives: where and how and why he was reborn as he was. Second, he is able to see other beings being born and reborn in different conditions and *why* they are so reborn. In effect, what this means is that he could see the mechanics of the law of karma - how actions have consequences, and that what happens is qualitatively conditioned by what occurred previously: this is both the how and the why of any given individual history. Third, he is able to see how to uproot the deepest of the tendencies which bind one to continued rebirth. In understanding the mechanics of continuity, he is able to do something about bringing his own personal cyclical experience to an end. The *āsavas* are the deepest of the 'continuity tendencies', and these are given as sensual desire, the desire for continued becoming, ignorance, and, in one context, the holding of false ' views'[12]. And immediately prior to turning his mind to the uprooting of these *āsavas*, the texts state that the Buddha 'understood human experience (stated as *dukkha*) as it really is, its cause, that it can cease, and how to bring about its cessation', which is precisely what he tells his listeners they should concern themselves with rather than asking all the questions to which I have referred above.

It is this formula, of course, that he gives in his so-called first sermon as the Four

Noble Truths[13]. In my view it is clear that *dukkha* should be interpreted subjectively. I make this point specifically because I have noticed a tendency to use the term *dukkha* with considerable latitude of meaning. Sometimes it is used simply as a synonym for *saṃsāra* (and in my view it is an equally wrong use of *saṃsāra*) in the sense not of the subjective experience of the individual but of the 'world' in which one has that subjective experience: that is, to describe what is 'out there'. However, not only does the Buddha separately define *dukkha* in terms of the *khandhas*, as mentioned above, but its subjective meaning is perhaps more importantly indicated in the context in which the Truths are first taught[14]. Here the Noble Truth of *dukkha* is described in terms of birth, old age, disease and death; of our relationships with what is dear to us and with fulfilling our desires; in short, it states, of the *khandhas*. The Noble Truth of the origin of *dukkha* is explicitly associated with subjective cravings and desires. The Noble Truth of the possibility of the cessation of *dukkha* is given as the stopping of those subjective cravings and desires. And the Noble Truth giving the path to follow to achieve that cessation is one of a variety of subjective disciplines.

Another teaching of the Buddha confirms the subjective nature of the Four Noble Truths as a whole: his teaching on karma. In common with his contemporaries, he accepted that actions have consequences. This, indeed, is the underlying rationale of the Vedic sacrificial religion: the verbal and physical actions of the sacrificial ritual have the consequence of bringing about what the sacrifice is for, whether it be sons, wealth, crops, rain, or the very maintenance of the cosmos. The point was that if actions are performed correctly, they have the ' right ' consequences. In the *Upaniṣads* this rationale was extended to the human being in the sense that if one performed all one's conjoined actions correctly one would be reborn in favorable circumstances. The Buddha, by contrast, introduced a qualitative - and therefore profoundly individually subjective - notion to the way karma works. He stated that what determines the consequence of any action, its consequence-producing part, is the intention behind it. It is not a matter of doing things correctly according to a given conjoined code, but of the qualitative state of mind by which the action is conditioned. And it is these 'intentions' that constitute the desires and cravings which cause the continuity of the experience of *dukkha*, as stated in the second Noble Truth. Furthermore, it is understanding the mechanics of how this works, insight into which is described as part of the experience of Enlightenment, that enables an individual to

asavas as fuel

set about uprooting the *āsavas* that fuel continuity.

The fact that one of the *āsavas* is ignorance indicates why it is that one goes on fuelling continuity with cravings and desires. And it is profoundly associated with the need to understand *dukkha* in the sense that it is *that* experience, the experience of being a human being, that is perpetuated because one is ignorant. It is not enough to know objectively how continuity is brought about, one has to understand subjectively why one goes on perpetuating the status quo of human experience. Why do we keep craving/ desiring/ having intentions? It is the elevating of this question to the level of an *āsava* (if I may so put it), and therefore associating the understanding of it with liberation, that distinguishes the Buddha's teachings from the Vedic teachings: In the latter, it is because of their objective understanding of the process that the priests/sacrificers continue to perform particular actions in pedicular ways with the aim of *maintaining* the status quo. According to the Buddha, it is all and any of one's actions, defined as intentions, that perpetuate the very status quo that presents the problem; and so a change in one's subjective experience can be brought about by understanding *why* we act as we do.

The Buddha starts from what one might call normal human experience - it is this that is unsatisfactory, or *dukkha*. And he states that the way we normally think of ourselves and therefore behave is from a standpoint of ignorance. In particular, it is implicit in our 'normally' having cravings/desires/intentions that we assume some degree of permanence and autonomy about ourselves and everything we experience. But, he states, that is not the way things are, and in this context he explicitly means the factors of human experience[15], really are. In the same way that according to the law of karma any given state of affairs or experience is conditioned by one's previous actions, so the way things are is not that they are permanent or autonomous: they are conditioned, they are dependent on their originating circumstances. And as such they cannot be permanent or independently autonomous in the way we normally think things are. Put differently, our thinking that we experience permanence and independent autonomy is what our ignorance is the conditioning factor of. And in thinking in such a way we continue to behave as independent desirers, having independent desires about independent objects of desire. In other words, we understand the factors of our experience in terms of their separateness. And another way of putting this is in terms of their independent self-ness. Non-separateness, or self-lessness, impermanence

and unsatisfactoriness (each characteristic following from its predecessor) are taught together in the *tilakkhana* formula[16]. And the key aspects of the nature of our ignorance as described here are specifically referred to in the Buddha's teachings on dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*)[17], and on the selflessness (*anattatā*) of all things. The way the latter teaching is commonly given is in connection with the analysis of the human being in terms of five *khandhas*: the body (*rūpa*), feelings (*vedanā*), apperception and conception (*saññā*), volitional activities (*saṃkhārā*) and consciousness (*viññāna*)[18]. The Buddha states that none of these aspects of human experience should be separately identified by us as constituting yourself (*attā*).

I have argued elsewhere[19] that interpreting the Buddha's doctrine of *anattā* as simply stating 'there is no self,' misses the point. I will not rehearse my arguments here (though it is tempting to ask rhetorically why, if this were his meaning, he did not just say so in reply to all the questions he did not answer about the nature of the soul), but will simply state that it seems to me, rather, that its meaning is that it refers to the way we erroneously superimpose independent separateness onto all the aspects of our experience, including ourselves as experiences. Because of the frequency with which he is questioned about the soul, though, the Buddha has to establish that in giving the analysis of the person in terms of the five *khandhas* he is not introducing an answer to any of such questions. In associating the *khandhas* explicitly with *anattā*, he is in my view doing no more than stating that they - along with everything else - are dependently originated. And I would go so far as to say that I think that what he means by this is how they work: each works in a process of dependent origination as does everything else - from karma to the continuity of the individual. This view is supported in the texts where the Buddha states that understanding dependent origination means that one *will no longer ask* questions about individual existence, past, future, or present, such as "Am I, or am I not? What am I? How am I? This ' being' that is 'I', where has it come from, where will it go?".[20] In my view, this is another passage deserving far greater attention than it commonly receives, as it is highly relevant to understanding the implications of the teachings as a whole.

I think the significance of this context in which *anattā* is most frequently referred to, that is in association with the *khandhas*, is that in being conditioned by our ignorance the process of experiencing independent separateness is subjectively imposed. It is by understanding this subjective process, by means of understanding how the

khandhas work, that one can see *dukkha* - the experience of being human - as it really is[21]. Specifically, one understands how experiential data are consciously assimilated, coordinated and identified. And for so long as one is operating from a standpoint of any degree of ignorance, one also superimposes 'manifoldness' (i.e. separateness) onto experiential data[22]. And it is because we impose this separateness that we continue to behave as separate desirers, thus perpetuating our experience of *dukkha*. In other words, what the Buddha is saying is that we have the experience that we do because our cognitive process works in a certain way, based on ignorance. And that experience can be changed if we understand how that cognitive process works and if we then, as it were, 'direct it aright'. One frequently comes across analogies associating human beings with computers, usually given by philosophers trying to understand what human beings are: are we hardware plus software plus electricity, and so on. I have my own analogy associating human beings with computers: if you want to use a computer properly and/or differently you don't need to know what it is, but you *do* need to know how it works: what it will do and how it does it. And to this end, what we identify its component factors as *being* is no more useful to us than the knowing of their names is (unless the knowing of their names also conveys to us what they *do*). What we need to be aware of is the way the component factors relate to each other; and it is the effect they have on one another that is significant, not what they are in themselves as separate constituents. This is, in my view, precisely what the Buddha was saying about the human being[23].

Whether or not I am correct in this last point, and I have to say that I think the evidence in support of it is compelling, I think it is clear that the Buddha's so-called 'doctrinal' teachings[24], and the way in which they are given, are notably person centred and that they focus on human experience. This orientation is highly significant when it comes to looking at the way the term *loka* is used in the early Pali texts. In common with so many of the key terms of early Buddhism, it is used in a wide variety of contexts. Of relevance to my theme in this paper is its specific usage as a metaphor for the life of an individual human being[25]. This metaphorical usage of *loka* is one of the correlates of the centrality of human experience to the Buddha's teachings. I will return shortly to this metaphor, but will first discuss the better-known metaphorical correspondence between levels of meditation and different cosmological levels (or 'worlds'-the term *loka* is used), thus producing what is called a psychological cosmology[26]. It was to this psychological cosmology that Richard

Gombrich referred in his Jordan Lectures Seminar Paper which I mentioned in my introduction, and about which he speculated "...surely these subjective states had some objective correlate?". It was not until the *Abhidhamma* that this metaphorical link between meditative attainment and cosmological level was formally established, and since then the Buddhist tradition has accepted the cosmological aspect of the correspondence as reflecting the 'external' world in all its complexity. In the earliest material, however, the correspondence between subjective state and cosmological level is at best unsystematically implicit. For example, the attainment of certain meditative states is sometimes said to be a prerequisite either of being reborn into or of contacting other beings in corresponding 'worlds'.[27] And it is made clear that no matter how good such a world might be, even if it is a 'completely happy world' (*ekantasukho loko*), it is to be eschewed in favour of attaining *Nirvāna*[28]. It is commonly assumed that such unsystematic references are the embryonic form of the later more detailed metaphorical structure[29].

In fact in the earlier texts it is as a metaphor for the entire life of the individual human being that *loka* is more specifically used. This is most clearly indicated in the *Khandha Samyutta*, which is primarily concerned with the analysis of the individual in terms of the five *khandhas*. Here we read that the five *khandhas* together comprise a "phenomenon which is a world in the world".[30] The context is one in which the Buddha states that he has no quarrel with the world (*nāham lokena vivadāmi*) or with some of the teachings of other teachers in the world (*loke panditā*). But he wants to establish a teaching which is not given by those other teachers, that of the five *khandhas*, which he has thoroughly penetrated and realized (*abhisambujjhati abhisameti*). This passage is making the point that the world with which the Buddha is concerned is the subjective world of experience.

Similarly, *loka* is sometimes used interchangeably with *dukkha*, itself identified by the Buddha as referring to the individual's subjective experience when he defined it in terms of the five *khandhas*, as I have already discussed. The Buddha's teachings are aimed at no longer being subject to rebirth, and frequently this is expressed as the "ceasing of all the *khandhas* which are *dukkha*".[31] This means to the point where the individual, who persists with five *khandhas* being reborn, achieves liberation. In the *Nidāna Samyutta* of the *Samyatta Nikāya*, two consecutive *suttas* are the same save for the fact that in the second *sutta loka* is substituted for *dukkha*. In these suttas, the

Buddha states: "I will teach you, bhikkhus, how *dukkha/loka* arises and how it ceases ... Visual consciousness arises because of sight and (visible) objects (and so on through all the senses); contact is the combination of the three; feeling is conditioned by contact; craving is conditioned by feeling. This, bhikkhus, is the arising of *dukkha/loka*".[32] The cessation of *dukkha/loka* comes about when the craving which is normally conditioned by feeling no longer occurs: when craving utterly fades away and ceases, then grasping, becoming, birth, and cyclic *samsāric* existence ceases. Again, the central point to extract from these passages is that one's subjective experience is so much the cardinal factor in the Buddha's teaching that its importance can be metaphorically stated in terms of the 'world'.[33]

[margin note: subjective world metaphor]

This same central point is made elsewhere it is stated that "It is these five types of sensual desire that are called the world in the discipline of the noble one".[34] The bhikkhu is to become detached from sensual desire and practise appropriate meditation. And when he eventually sees that his *āsavas* are completely destroyed, he "is said to have come to the end of the world, he lives at the end of the world, he has overcome attachment in the world".[35] And again where we read: "Bhikkhus, I declare that the end of the world is not to be learned, seen, or *dukkha* can be made without attaining the end of the world".[36] Later in the same sutta, the individual's 'world' is again defined in terms of the senses. The relevance of the senses in these contexts is that all our incoming experiential data come through our senses. It is because we cognitively process that incoming data as we do that we continue to have cravings; and it is because of such cravings that our 'world' has continued existence: this is how the individual continues. And it is this - this particular 'world' of experience-that the Buddhist disciple seeks to understand.

In my view, such metaphors serve to emphasize the extent to which the Buddha, in consistently drawing attention away from the 'external' world to the subjective world of experience, was, as Richard Gombrich stated, "not interested in what existed 'out there'". In discussing such examples elsewhere, I have gone on to suggest that the whole notion of Buddhist cosmology is underpinned by the metaphor of the spiritual path of the individual: that all cosmological references are in fact metaphors for different stages on the spiritual path[37]. According to the Pali, this is not incompatible with those contexts where meditative attainments are referred to in terms of 'world', the contexts which are considered to be the embryonic stages of the psychological

cosmology to which I have referred above. At MN. II. 37, for example, the 'completely happy world' (*ekantasukho loko*) is described in terms of being 'realized' or 'seen' or 'experienced' (*sacchikata*), none of which need have a spacial interpretation. The Buddha is clearly using metaphors when in the same context he states that in order to experience the completely happy world the disciple 'enters and abides in' (*upasampajja viharati*) the fourth *jhāna*. No-one would suggest that this refers to anything other than an altered state of mind; and I suggest the metaphor extends to include the 'completely happy world' as that state of mind[38].

My view is (and I think my reasons will become clear below) that the metaphor should be taken as the 'norm', and passages which apparently refer to cosmological levels in spacial terms should be interpreted metaphorically[39]. It is significant in this respect that there is no cosmological level associated with *Nirvāṇa*[40], and that the famous *Udāna* passage about the sphere where there is neither earth, nor water, nor heat nor wind, ends by saying: "It is this that is the end of *dukkha*".[41] Though if taken literally this passage is open to spacial interpretation, it clearly also lends itself to metaphorical interpretation if *dukkha* is understood as the subjective experience of the individual. Put differently, if worldly existence is characterized in terms of the four elements (which it is [42]),then this passage is metaphorically referring to the subjective experience of *Nirvāṇa*, or *dukkhanirodha* (the cessation of *dukkha*) in terms of *lokanirodha*, or the absence of what characterizes worldly existence[43]. I suggest the terms *lokiya*, worldly, and *lokuttara*, beyond the world, which are used to refer to, in the former case, the disciple on the early stages of the path, and, in the latter case, the disciple who is nearing the end of the path, are in fact correspondingly metaphorical along the same lines.

[margin: spatially defined is metaphor]

[margin: literalism & spaciality]

[margin: lokiya lokuttara ... nature]

Again, whether or not I am correct in the extent of my interpretation, the Buddha's concern with the subjective experience of the individual is clear not just from the way in which he gives his teachings -deliberately drawing attention away from externals to internals, so to speak -but also from his metaphorical use of the term *loka*, world, to refer to that individual subjective experience.

[margin: Hamilton's ...]

In turning now to the metaphysical implications of the doctrines of *anattā* and *paṭiccasamuppāda*, I would like, and no doubt this will be unsurprising, to suggest that these doctrines should be interpreted subjectively also. From what we have seen

so far, the Buddha's teachings can clearly be stated in terms of the subjective superimposition, because of one's ignorance, of separateness (we make manifold - *papañceti*) onto incoming experiential data. In doing so we attribute varying degrees of permanence and independence to those manifold things. The point here is that *we do all this subjectively*. The Buddha's teachings on dependent origination, impermanence and selflessness can lead one to think that there are 'things' that are external to us that are dependently originated from or by other things, and that all those things are therefore impermanent and therefore selfless. The *tilakkhaṇa* formula, for example, states "all conditioned [i.e. dependently originated] things (*saṃkhārā*) are impermanent; all conditioned things (*saṃkhārā*) are [therefore] unsatisfactory; all things (*dhammā*) are selfless". Until recently I myself would have endorsed the view that this describes how 'things' are, and that the mistake we make is not to see that 'they' are like that.

But this is in fact remaining in the perspective of reifying what we see as external to us but conceding that we fail to see the dependent originatedness of what we take to be its independent/separate parts. And though this might be a profoundly different way of understanding the world from our 'normal' way, it is nevertheless still "mistak[ing] epistemological entities for ontological ones".[44] My view now is that what the doctrines of dependent origination and selflessness specifically mean is not just that the things that we experience are not as separate as we think they are, but that what all of what we experience is dependently originated in is our subjective processing faculties. The early texts clearly describe the way incoming data is received, by way of the senses (which are called 'doors'[45]), assimilated and coordinated, recognized and made manifold[46]. Thus all the things we see are impermanent, and therefore unsatisfactory, because they are conditioned by us - not because they are *in themselves* conditioned: by each other, so to speak. While I may be drawing this point out in my own particular way, I actually do not think I am saying anything new here, though it would perhaps sound more familiar in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism[47]. But it is so radically different from, or, the Buddha would say, 'goes against the stream of' how we think that it is all too easy to miss the implication of it.

The implication is that the furthest one can go in terms of what anything with which we are familiar is - its ontological status, in other words - is that it depends for its

existence *as that* on our subjective cognitive processes. And this includes not just the things 'in' the world as we conceive of it, but 'the world' itself in its totality. The only world there is, in any sense in which it remains the world as we mean that term, is the world of experience; what we mean by 'the world' is not *other than* experience. In the light of Richard Gombrich's comments quoted in my introduction , the point needing to be drawn out here is that while subjective states have objective correlates, it is inappropriate to think of such correlates in terms of 'out there' in any reified-or 'other'- sense. While the subjective cognitive constructing process does indeed involve objectivity, it does not at all follow that such objectivity corresponds to what is *externally* real: the notion of the polarity of the internal 'me' in the external 'world' is part of the construction of manifoldness[48].

I hardly need to point out at this stage the extent to which this fits in with the Buddha's emphasis on the need to understand 'the world' subjectively, and why he showed no interest in what existed 'out there'. And it clearly explains the famous expression "In this fathom-long living body lies the world, the arising of the world, and the cessation of the world".[49] Furthermore, it ties in with my suggestion that the analysis of the person as *khandhas* should be understood in terms of their constituting the subjective cognitive process: because our experience of the world is as it is because of the way we process incoming experiential data, then what we need to understand is that process.

By extension from this last point, I suggest that in describing Enlightenment as seeing things 'as they really are' (*yathābhūtaṃ*), the Buddha was referring to the understanding of the cognitive process which is so instrumental in fuelling the continuity of our experience: to the seeing of the human situation as it really is. And it follows from this that, as Professor Karunadasa puts it, the object of higher knowledge is not a higher reality but the phenomenal world. As such, it is understandable-indeed, obvious-why the Buddha so consistently directed his teachings towards that and nothing other than that.

But in considering the nature of the phenomenal world in the light of the teachings of the Buddha, it is nevertheless legitimate to draw out a further subject for consideration. Do the teachings of the Buddha described and interpreted as above have the further implication that the world is not real or that nothing really exists?

And if the object of higher reality is the phenomenal world, and that phenomenal world, as we know it, is dependent on our subjective cognitive processes, does it indeed follow that the possibility of any metaphysical reality which serves as the ultimate ground of existence is excluded, as Professor Karunadasa suggests? The issues involved in such questions, many of which were, and still are, hotly debated with regard to Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings, have been elaborated and systematized by philosophers. A full and proper discussion of such issues would require a paper of its own [50], and I will here just draw attention to the points which I consider to be most relevant to my theme and consistent with the teachings of the Buddha as given in the earliest Pali material.

First, then, with regard to the reality of the experiential world, it is because "the whole world of experience is precisely what it seems"[51] that that world requires investigating. In insisting on the primacy of experience, the Buddha is very specifically confirming the reality of the experiential world: it is because the world of experience is real that it constitutes the problem needing to be solved, in the Buddha's terms[52].

Second, from saying that the 'world'(as we mean that particular term) is in fact a world of experience, it does not follow that therefore 'in Reality' (capital 'R') nothing exists: that however much one acknowledges the reality of experience, by being experiential there is some 'absolute' sense in which nothing exists. Far from it. Not only is this clearly stated to be a 'wrong view' in the texts: "Having the view that nothing exits... this is tainted fare".[53] But, far more importantly and convincingly, it is because the phenomenal world of experience is dependently originated, and therefore dependent-period, that there *must* be something else. If there were not, the phenomenal world, the world of experience, would have to be autonomous, which the Buddha's teachings both implicitly and explicitly state is not the case. It is the common human experience of such Reality that constitutes the phenomenal world, and it is the understanding of the mechanics of this process that is liberating. In *itself*, such Reality is clearly not, and *cannot* be, part of our experience. So it in no way constitutes the object of the higher knowledge that is the goal of the Buddhist disciple. Furthermore, to refer to it in terms of Self is to project phenomenal conceptual categories beyond the boundaries of their meaningful reference. But we nevertheless can have the experience that we do only because it is there[54]. I have come to think this is precisely the meaning of the famous (and famously ambiguous) *Udāna* passage: "There is, bhikkhus, an unborn, an unbecome, an unconstructed, an unconditioned,

without which, bhikkhus, the resultant born, become, constructed, conditioned could not be known [experienced]. But because there is, bhikkhus, an unborn, an unbecome, an unconstructed, an conditioned, the resultant born, become, constructed, conditioned can be known [experienced]."[55] And it is striking that the meaningfulness, of this statement does not lie in its position of entities, things, the 'what'-ness of the world. Rather, it lies in its indicating the significance of the relatedness of Reality, the phenomenal world, and experience.

Within the confines of the Buddha's teaching, the problem he set himself to solve does not, as he repeatedly makes clear, require any interest in anything other than how the interactive subjective-objective processes of the experiential world operate: anything else is both tangential to the solving of the problem and inconceivable from the standpoint of ignorance. And I have myself previously regarded ontological speculation to be misplaced in a Buddhist context[56]. So I would be the first person to acknowledge that in some respects I might be skating on thin ice in coming to the conclusion that I have. But in other respects it is not an illegitimate enterprise to attempt to unravel the implications of the Buddha's teachings for oneself: he himself suggested that we should 'be lamps for ourselves and use the *dhamma* as a lamp'.[57] Furthermore, as I have pointed out elsewhere[58], the principal criterion in the very early stages of the Buddhist tradition for acceptance of material as canonical was compatibility. According to this criterion, I believe my conclusion is at least possible since it is compatible with what the Buddha taught.

In summary, I am suggesting that all the Buddha's teachings are person-centred in the specific sense of focussing on human experience, and that that experience is not separate from the phenomenal world. It is because they are not separate that I stated above that the wider implications of the teaching are best understood in the light of this person-centredness. And with regard to questions about that nature of the phenomenal world, the non-separateness of the world and experience means not only that what we can know about the world cannot be separated from experience, but that in understanding experience one does understand the world: "Bhikkhus, I declare that the end of the world is not to be learned, seen, or attained by going to the end of the world. Nor do I declare, bhikkhus, that the end of *dukkha* [i.e.understanding experience] can be made *without* [my italics] attaining the end of the world".[59] It is for this very reason that the Buddha diverts attention from the 'external' world to the

subjective world of experience, using *loka* metaphorically for the life of the individual in the way he does. His 'know thyself, teaching implicitly involves knowledge of the objective world also: the two are inseparable and correlated. And it is precisely this that underlies the metaphor in the sense of the later more elaborated psychological cosmology: as the objective correlate of subjective states, the entire cosmos is in an ontological sense associated with experience[60].

The object of higher knowledge for the Buddhist disciple is, then, undoubtedly the phenomenal world and not a higher reality. But it seems also undoubtedly the case that the dependent nature of the phenomenal world implies that there must actually be a higher reality which serves as the ground of that phenomenal world.

RECENT RESEARCHES IN BUDDHIST STUDIES

Essays in Honour of

Professor Y. Karunadasa

The Dependent Nature of the

Phenomenal World

– Notes –

Sue Hamilton

Notes

1 This paper is an adaptation of a paper entitled "The 'External World': its Status and Relevance", given at The Buddhist Forum at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in November 1995, to be publishedd in its original form in a forthcoming volume of papers from The Buddhist Forum.

2 Professor Y. Karunadasa, "The Buddhist Doctrine of Non-Self and the Problem of the Over-Self" in *The Middle Way*, Vol. 69, No.2, August 1994, p.116.

3 *ibid*, p.107.

4 I rely for my interpretation on the early doctrinal teachings given by the Buddha as found in the *Nikāyas* of the Pali Canon.

5 Richard Gombrich, Louis H. Jordan Lectures Seminar Paper 2, *Metaphor, allegory, satire* (publication forthcoming), p.11 and p.13 respectively.

6 cf. in particular the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN,Vol I) and the *Pāsādika Suttanta* (DN,Vol III) for the more extensive range of questions. All references to Pali texts are Pali Text Society editions. All translations from the Pali are my own unless otherwise stated.

7 cf., for example, SN.II.223, V.418; MN.I.395; DN.I, *sutta* 1,III.134ff. cf. also MN.I.157, 426ff, 483ff; SN.IV.374ff. The way the Buddha puts it is that it would not be conducive to "good...to insight, Enlightenment, *Nirvāṇa*". Throughout the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN *sutta* 1), and at MN.I.487, the Buddha also states that answers to such questions cannot meaningfully be explained: they have to be understood through insight.

8 cf., for example, DN.III.136; MN.I.431; SN.II.223,V.418.

9 *Saṃkhittena pañc' upādānakkhandhā dukkhā*: e.g. SN.V.421; MN.I.48; AN.I.177. cf. also SN.III.158: *Katamañ ca bhikkhave dukkhaṃṃ ? pañc' upādānakkhandhā ti 'ssa vacanīyaṃ; Dhammapada* 202; *n'atthi khandhādisā dukkhā* ; and Vin.I.9f, referred to below, where the first Noble Truth of *dukkha* is summarised as the *khandhas* . On the significance of *upādāna* in association with *khandhā* , cf. my *Identity and Experience : the Constitution of the Human Being according to Early Buddhism* , Luzac Oriental, London, 1996, p.9, and R.M.L. Gethin "The five *Khandhas* : their treatment in the *Nikāyas* and early Buddhisim" in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* , 14, 1986, p.41.

10 I made this point, as well as one or two others referred to in the first part of this paper, in a lecture entitled "Metaphysical and methodological implications of the central orientation of the Buddha's teachings" given at the European Centre for oriental Philosophy in November 1995.

11 MN. I. 22f; AN. IV. 178f; Vin.III.4.

12 Vin.III.4 gives the four *āsavas*.

13 SN.V.420f; Vin.I.9f.

14 The following detail is given only in the *Vinaya* version.

15 Coming to know *dukkha* as it really is leads to knowing the *āsavas* , including ignorance, as they really are: cf., for example, AN.II.210, IV.178; Vin.I.9f.

16 AN. I. 286; *Dhammapada*, 5-7, 277-279; cf. also MN.I.336; DN.II.157.

17 SN.II.25 and throughout the *Nidāna Saṃyutta*.

18 There are numerous references to this throughout the *Khandhā Vagga* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

19 "*Anattā* : A Different Approach" in *The Middle Way* , Vol 70, 1, May 1995.

20 SN.II.27:...*ahaṃ nu kho smi, na nu kho smi; kiṃ nu kho smi; kathaṃ nu kho smi; ahaṃ nu kho satto kuto āgato so kuhiṃgāmī bhavissati ti*.

21 This suggestion is elaborated in my book *Identity and Experience*, op. cit.

22 MN.I.111: *Yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti* .

23 This suggestion, put differently, is a key point in my paper "*Anattā* : A Different Approach", op. cit.

24 That is the Four Noble Truths, the *tilakkhaṇa* formula, *paṭiccasamuppāda, anattā* and the *khandha* analysis. I shall return to *paṭiccasamuppāda* and *anattā* in more detail below.

25 It is a metapor that pre-dates the Buddha's teaching. cf. my *Identity and Experience*, p. xxvif; J. Gonda, *Loka : World and Heaven in the Veda*, Amsterdam, N.V. Noord Hollandsche Uitgers Maatschappif, 1966, p. 110 and *passim* ; and Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 45ff.

26 The cosmology itself is described in R.F. Gombrich,"Ancient Indian Cosmology" in C. Blacker and M. Loewe (eds.), *Ancient Cosmologies* , London, George Allen & Unwin, 1975. The correspondence is discussed in Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons* , op. cit., p. 217, and Peter Masefield "Mind/Cosmos Maps in the Pāli *Nikāyas* " in N. Katz (ed.), *Buddhist and Western Psychology*, Boulder, Prajñā Press, 1983, p.78.

27 cf., for example, AN.II.126-130; MN. II.37, 194f.

28 MN.II.37.

29 cf. the entry for *loka* in Nyanatiloka's *Buddhist Dictionary* (Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1980, p.108f), which reflects the commonly accepted view: "Though the term *loka* is not applied in the Suttas to those ... worlds ... there is no doubt that the teaching about the ... worlds belongs to the earliest, i.e. Sutta period of the Buddhist scriptures ... ."
30 SN.III.139: *Loke lokadhamno* .

31 *Evaṃ etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti* , found frequently throughout the *Nidāna Saṃyutta*.

32 SN.II.71ff: *Dukkhassa/lokassa bhikkhave samudayañca attaṅgamañca desissāmi ... . Cakkhuṃ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ tiṇṇam saṅgati phasso phassapaccayā vedanā vedanāpaccayā taṇhā. Ayam kho bhikkhave dukkhassa/lokassa samudayo. Taṇhāya*

33 I have argued in my *Identity and Experience, op. cit.* (p.xxvii), that such passages should not be construed to mean 'the world is, or is in, (my) mind' - that is, idealism (or solipsism) as it is usually understood.

34 AN.IV.430: Pañca' ime ... *kāmaguṇā ariyassa vinaya loko ti vuccati.*

35 AN.IV.43f: *Bhikkhu ... paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati ... Bhikkhu lokassa antaṃ āgamma lokassa ante viharati tiṇṇo loke visattikaṃ it.*

36 SN.IV.93: *Nāhaṃ bhikkhave gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñātayyaṃ daṭṭhayyaṃ pattayyan ti vadāmi. Na ca punāhaṃ bhikkhave apatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi ti.*

37 At each of these stages, moreover, the individual exists in a correspondingly different way, ranging through degrees of density and subtlety to formlessness. cf. my *Identity and Experience, op. cit.*, p.99 and chapter VII.

38 Though for brevity and convenience I translate *sukha* as 'happy', in fact I think that as the converse of *dukkha* it is most properly understood metaphorically - as the absence of the 'dis-ease' (*dukkha*) of ignorance.

39 In this I disagree with Peter Masefield (*op. cit*), who sees "no reason why we should not take such [spacial] expressions quite literally" (p. 81; and cf. also p. 83).

40 Richard Gombrich's reference (Jordan Seminar Paper, *op. cit* , p. 5) to the 'unboundedness' of the Buddhist universe reflects this.

41 *Udāna* 80: *Es 'ev' anto dukkhassa 'it.*

42 cf. my *Identity and Experience,* p. cit., chapter 1. Briefly, the elements correspond to the way our worldly experience is characterised by solidity, fluidity, heat (temperature) and motion.

43 Peter Masefield (*op. cit.* , p. 81) states that *Nirvāṇa* is "spoken of as a place as often as it is a state of mind". But the examples he gives (island/*dīpa*, cave/*lena*, shelter/*tāṇaṃ*, refuge/*saraṇaṃ*, etc.) are to my mind all clearly metaphors. It would not be considered odd if in daily life one were to refer to having experienced an 'island' or 'oasis' of calm in a busy day. But we would not (certainly not necessarily) expect such reference to island or oasis to be taken literally. Rather, we would mean having found some 'mental space' in a day when the mind was cluttered with many other things.

44 Bryan Magee *On Blindness* , Oxford University Press, 1995, p.19; and cf. also Bryan Magee *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* , Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983, p.83.

45 cf. my *Identity and Experience, op. cit.* , chapter 1.

46 MN.I.111.

47 cf., for example, Paul Griffiths "Pure Consciousness and Indian Buddhism" in Robert K.C. Forman (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness* , Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 87f: As the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* puts it: 'Bodhisattvas who are free from constructive

activity see this entire [cosmos], just as it has been described, as nothing but construction'
....all the ways we have of describing things, of dividing the word into subjects and predicates, are the product of the constructive activity of the mind." (Griffiths' expression 'dividing the world into' illustrates how easy it is to imply the reification, however unwittingly, of 'the world'.)

48 In modern philosophical terms, this is, in effect, stating that transcendental realism is wrong.

49 AN.II.48ff.

50 Some of the issues are discussed in the original version of this paper, "The External World': its Status and Relevance", *op. cit.*

51 Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Shopenhauer, op .cit.*, p. 84.

52 Thomas Kochumuttom's much-neglected book *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1982) interprets Vasubandhu and the so-called 'mind-only' school in these terms, refuting the more common idealistic interpretation.

53 *Sutta Nipāta* 243: *natthikadiṭṭhi ... esāmagandho* . This is K.R. Norman's translation.

54 In philosophical terms, this is known as transcendental idealism. cf. Bryam Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer, op. cit.* , p.85:"... the transcendentally ideal and the empirically real are complementary, the two components of total reality, and without the former the latter could not exist."

55 *Udāna* 80f: *Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkhataṃ, no ce taṃ bhikkhave abhavissa ajataṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkhataṃ, na yidha jātasa bhūtassa katassa saṃkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyetha. Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṃkhataṃ , tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṃkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyati 'ti* My phrasing does not overlook the genitives: it merely makes more sense of the passage in English. In order to support his spacial understanding of *Nirvāṇa* , Masefield (*op. cit.* p.83) translates these genitives as ablatives: that one 'escapes from' the born 'to' (spacially) the unborn.

56 Particulary in the Introduction to my *Identity and Experience* , *op. cit.*

57 DN.II.100.

58 "*Anattā* : A Different Approach", *op. cit.* , p. 55.

59 SN.IV.93 *Nāhaṃ bhikkhave gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñātayyaṃ daṭṭhayyaṃ pattayyan ti vadāmi . Na ca panāhaṃ bhikkhave apatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi ti* .

60 And the fact that we are happy to acknowledge that there are vast areas of worldly complexity about which we are at present ignorant *even as to their nature* suggests that we should be correspondingly willing to accept the likelihood of there being subjectively correlated

Wrong View (micchā-diṭṭhi) and Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) in the Theravāda Abhidhamma

Rupert Gethin

Despite the fact that the Buddhist tradition has often accorded it an exalted status, the Abhidharma has received relatively little attention from modern scholars. Those working on the Pali materials tend to concentrate their efforts on the Nikāyas in the endeavour of elucidating the nature of the earliest phase of Buddhist thought, while for scholars working with the Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan materials it is the Mahāyāna philosophical schools—the Madhyamaka and to a lesser extent the Yogācāra—that have most consistently captured the imagination. There have, of course, been notable exceptions, such as Louis de La Vallée Poussin's monumental work of scholarship, his annotated French translation of Hsüan-tsang's translation of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakoṣa-bhāṣya* or Erich Frauwallner's *Abhidharmastudien*[1].

In any review of works of modern scholarship concerned with Abhidharma studies, Professor Karunadasa's study of rūpa must be counted as one of the significant contributions[2]. One of the things that makes this an important contribution is Professor Karunadasa's commitment to dealing with the materials relevant to rūpa in both the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma systems. In the task of charting the evolution of Buddhist thought, the clarification of issues in the development of the Abhidharma thought is of paramount importance. As is becoming clearer, it is only in the context of Abhidharma discussions that the Mahāyāna systems of thought of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra can be properly understood. The present article represents an attempt to further the comparative understanding of issues in the study of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma in the manner exemplified by Professor Karunadasa.

The particular focus of the present article is the Abhidharma understanding of 'views' (diṭṭhi/dṛṣṭi). My starting point is an article by Padmanabh S. Jaini, a scholar who has made an important contribution to our understanding of especially the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma. In 1977 Professor Jaini contributed a paper to a volume in honour of

Edward Conze entitled, '*Prajñā* and *dṛṣṭi* in the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma'.[3] This paper pointed out that contrary to what some might have expected, the understanding of *Prajñā* and *dṛṣṭi* reflected in the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma coincided in certain important respects with the understanding of the Prajñāpāramitā literature: the highest wisdom is free from all views including significantly 'right view' (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*). In passing Professor Jaini contrasted the Prajñāpāramitā and Vaibhāṣika understanding of *Prajñā* and *dṛṣṭi* with that found in the Theravāda Abhidhamma. The present paper owes much to Professor Jaini's insights, but his comments on the Theravāda Abhidhamma understanding of paññā and diṭṭhi seem to me misleading in certain respects, and I would like to try to explore the Theravāda treatment further.

First let me try to summarise more fully the account of the Vaibhāṣika understanding of *dṛṣṭi* that Professor Jaini presents in his article. He points out that *dṛṣṭi* is not listed as one of the seventy-five *dharmas* of the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma. This is because it is understood not to be a *dharma* in its own right, but rather as a particular mode of occurrence of another *dharma*, namely *prajñā/mati*, one of the ten *caittas* common to all occurrences of *citta* (Abhidh-k-bh II 24); *dṛṣṭi* in fact constitutes one of two basic subclasses of prajñā: prajñā that involves 'judgement' (*santīrika*) as opposed to *prajñā* that is free from or beyond judgement (*asantīrika*) (pp. 407–8). The latter subclass in fact consists of the two kinds of pure *anāsrava* knowledge that occur at the moment of the attainment of Arhatship, knowledge of the destruction of the *āsravas* and knowledge of their nonarising, together with the *prajñā* that arises in association with the five kinds of immediate sense consciousness[4]; all other occurrences of *prajñā* fall into the former class (Abhidh-k-bh I 41c–d, VII 1) and are thus instances of *dṛṣṭi*. But this primary subclass of *prajñā* itself falls into two further subclasses: wrong or false views (*mithyā-dṛṣṭi*) and right views (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*). Wrong or false view, then, is not understood, as one might have perhaps expected, as some sort of manifestation of delusion (*moha, avidyā*), but counter-intuitively as a form of 'wisdom' or *prajñā*—albeit a form conditioned by delusion.

Views in general are instances of *prajñā* that entail a certain kind of determining or judgement; wrong or false views involve faulty and inaccurate determining or judgement; right views correct and accurate. Prior to the arising of the *darçana-mārga* and the attainment of the path of streamattainment, beings waver between false views and ordinary (*laukika*) right views, but at the moment of stream-attainment

'the path of seeing' abandons, once and for all, all false views. The first factor of the eightfold path, right view (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*), is thus established. But this does not mean that the stream-attainer has perfected wisdom; there is the higher *prajñā*, beyond judgements, beyond right-view, to be attained by the path of Arhatship. Jaini interprets this *prajñā*'s being beyond judgement in terms of its being free from what the Mahāyāna texts call 'conceptual constructions' (*vikalpa*), although, unlike the Mahāyāna equivalent, it is still defined as having as its object true existents, namely *dharmas*.

Since it was not his prime concern, Jaini's account of *diṭṭhi* in the Theravāda Abhidhamma is, understandably, incomplete. He merely notes that the Theravādins define *diṭṭhi* exclusively in terms of 'false view' (*micchādiṭṭhi/mithyā-dṛṣṭi*) which is then treated as a *dhamma* in its own right, distinct from both *paññā* and delusion (*moha, avijjā*); the Theravādins then take 'right-view' (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), established at the moment of streamattainment, not as a form of *diṭṭhi* but as equivalent to the highest wisdom (*paññā*). From this he draws two conclusions. (1) On the Theravāda view, the highest *paññā* (= *sammā-diṭṭhi*), although free of false views, is not understood, as it is in the Vaibhāṣika system, to be beyond all views; the Theravādins are in fact content with a simple 'breakdown of cognition into "inaccurate" and "accurate" modes' (p. 407), whereas the Vaibhāṣkas in effect propose a break down into three essential modes, namely inaccurate, accurate and free of judgement. (2) Furthermore, for the Theravādins the distinction between stream-attainment and arahatship is not one of 'understanding attained', as it is in the Vaibhāṣka system, but one of 'defilements overcome' (p. 407). In other words, the highest wisdom and understanding is already attained at the moment of stream-attainment, and a text such as the Atthasālinī struggles to explain the function of *sammā-diṭṭhi* in the higher paths.

This statement of the matter seems to me somewhat misleading and not to take proper account of the particular dynamic of the Theravāda system. For the remainder of this paper I would like to fill in the Theravāda account of *diṭṭhi*, comment on the two conclusions drawn by Jaini and finish by passing some comments on the relationship of greed and ignorance in Buddhist thought and its significance for the Buddhist understanding of what constitutes wisdom and knowledge.

Paññā and diṭṭhi in the Theravāda Abhidhamma

To say that the Theravādins understand *diṭṭhi* in the restricted sense of what the Vaibhāṣkas call *mithyā-dṛṣṭi* is of course correct as far as it goes, but since in the Vaibhāṣka system *mithyā-* and *samyag-diṭṭhi* are species of the same *dharma*, namely *prajñā*, while in the Theravāda they are two quite distinct dharmas, to say this and no more obscures the peculiar dynamic of the Theravāda system. A closer examination of the Theravāda understanding of the relationship between *Paññā* and *diṭṭhi* in the light of Jaini's findings thus promises to illuminate aspects of Buddhist thought more generally.

In trying to demarcate the differences between the Vaibhāṣka and Theravāda presentation of *prajñā/paññā*, one must first take account of the fact that for the Theravādins *paññā*, unlike *prajñā* for the Vaibhāṣkas, is not a universal *cetasika* arising with all instances of thought. For the Theravādins *paññā* is not even universal to all 'skilful' consciousness (*kusala-citta*). In sensesphere (*kāmāvacara*) consciousness it is in fact restricted to the four types of skilful consciousness associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa-sampayutta*), along with the corresponding resultant (*vipāka*) and kiriya consciousnesses; otherwise wisdom is a feature of the types of consciousness constituting various mediation attainments: the fifteen form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*) consciousnesses, the twelve formless -sphere (*arūpāvacara*) and the types of 'world-transcending' (*lokuttara*) consciousness that constitute the attainment of the paths and fruits of stream-entry (*sotāpatti*), once-return (*sakadāgāmitā*), non-return (*anāgāmitā*) and arahatship (*arahatta*)[5].

Jaini refers to the Theravāda understanding of the equivalence of *paññā* and *sammā-diṭṭhi*; this equivalence is established in the canonical Abhidhamma texts by the register of terms employed in the definition of *paññā* in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga*; this regularly includes the term *sammādiṭṭhi*[6]. That *paññā* and *sammā-diṭṭhi* should be regarded as that which knows the four truths, and hence the highest wisdom, follows from various passages repeated in the Nikāya and Abhidhamma texts[7].

For the Theravādins, then, as Jaini has pointed out, (*micchā-*)*diṭṭhi* is taken as a distinct dhamma in its own right while *sammā-diṭṭhi* is equated with *paññā* or wisdom,

but it does not necessarily follow from this, as Jaini seems to assume, that the Theravādins simply break down 'cognition into "inaccurate" and "accurate" modes', and that no distinctions are made in the Theravāda Abhidhamma between different levels and kinds of (micchā-)diṭṭhi, between different levels and kinds of paññā, or between different levels and kinds of sammā-diṭṭhi. Jaini makes the extremely important point (p. 406) that the Vaibhāṣikas use the term prajñā ' in a generic rather than specific sense', but as I have argued elsewhere, the same is true of the terms for all dharmas in both the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda systems: the terms for all dharmas signify generic classes of events[8]. Thus, for example, according to the Dhammasaṅgaṇi the 'awakening factor of investigation of dhamma' (dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga), like sammā-diṭṭhi, can be seen as equivalent to the dhamma of paññā, yet this is only so at the moments of attaining the transcendent paths and fruits, and thus not all instances of paññā are instances of dhamma-vacaya-sambojjhaṅga[9]. Thus for the Dhammasaṅgaṇi a moment of ordinary sense-sphere consciousness accompanied by knowledge constitutes a real occurrence of wisdom and right view, yet it is only at the moments of attaining stream-entry, once-return, non-return or arahatship that wisdom is strong or intense enough to constitute the awakening factor of investigation of dhammas. For the Theravāda Abhidhamma, then, distinctions between different 'degrees' of paññā certainly exist. Indeed, if this were not the case we would have to conclude, on the basis of the fact that the Dhammasaṅgaṇi regards sammā-diṭṭhi as a general concomitant of skilful sense-sphere consciousness connected with knowledge, that there is no distinction to be made not only between the understanding of the streamattainer and the understanding of the arahat, but also between the understanding of the ordinary unawakened puthujjana and that of the arahat[10]. Such a conclusion can hardly be intended, since it makes a nonsense of the Buddhist path to awakening.

A basic distinction is already made in the Nikāyas—in the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta—between, on the one hand, sammā-diṭṭhi that is not free of the defiling influxes (sāsava), concerned with auspicious, meritorious action (puññabhāgiya) and which results in the acquisition of further rebirth (upadhivepakka) and, on the othre hand, sammā-diṭṭhi that is 'noble' (ariya), free of the defiling influxes (anāsava), world-transcending (lokuttara) and a factor of the path (maggaṅga)[11]. The first is defined according to a stock Nikāya formula:
There are such things as giving, sacrificing, offering, the fruit and result of good and

bad deeds, this world and the next world, mother and father, beings who are spontaneously born, ascetics and brahmins pursuing and following right practice who, having directly known and realized for themselves both this world and the next, make it known[12].

The commentary explains that the former is concerned with ordinary insight (*vipassanā*), while the latter is concerned with the right view gained at the time of attaining the transcendent path[13]. In other words, the Theravāda Abhidhamma is clearly working with an understanding of *paññā/sammādiṭṭhi* which allows distinctions of degree to exist: some instances of wisdom or right view amount to a fuller or more complete understanding and knowledge than others, despite the fact that all instances represent manifestations of the one and the same kind of *dhamma*.

The comment of the *Atthasālinī* to the effect that the three higher paths of once-return, non-return and Arahatship see only what has already been seen by the lower path of stream-attainment is not necessarily inconsistent with the view that *sammādiṭṭhi* admits of differences of degree or intensity[14]. Essentially the same thing may be experienced more fully and deeply.

Furthermore, in detailing which cittas no longer arise for the stream-attainer, the commentator makes it clear that he does not interpret the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* as proposing that there is no distinction in understanding attained between the stream-attainer and the arahat[15]. The stream-attainer does not abandon all ignorance and thus has not perfected wisdom. He abandons five kinds of akusala *citta*: four connected with view (*diṭṭhigata-sampayutta*) and one connected with doubt (*vicikicchā-sampayutta*); there remain seven types of unskilful *citta* that the stream attainer still experiences: the four rooted in greed and delusion which may or may not be connected with conceit (*māna*) but are not connected with (*micchā*)-*diṭṭhi*, two rooted in aversion and delusion, and one connected with restlessness (*uddhacca*). All seven are of these *cittas* are thus rooted in delusion (*moha*); the stream-attainer's understanding cannot be perfect; some degree of ignorance or delusion remains to be abandoned, and some degree of wisdom or understanding remains to be attained[16].

If we examine the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* description of each of the four transcendent paths, we find that the path of stream-attainment is described as 'for the sake of

abandoning views' (*diṭṭhigatānaṃ pahānāya*), the path of once-return as 'for the sake of weakening sensual desire and aversion' (*kāmarāga-vyāpādānaṃ patanūbhāvāya*), the path of non-return as 'for the sake of abandoning without remainder any sensual desire and aversion' (*kāmarāga-vyāpādānaṃ anavasesa-ppahānāya*), the path of Arahantship as 'for the sake of abandoning without remainder any desire for the form and formless spheres, conceit, restlessness and ignorance' (*rūparāga-rūparāgamāna-uddhacca-avijjāya anavasesa-ppahānāya*)[17]. This view of the matter fits with the earlier Nikāya/Āgama tradition of the stream-attainer's abandoning the first three of the ten fetters: *sakkāya-diṭṭhi, vicikicchā* and *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*[18]. The remaining fetters include *avijjā*, which is completely abandoned only by the arahat[19].

For the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Atthasālinī* at the time of the arising of the path of stream-attainment there occurs a particular manifestation of *paññā* that has the function of abandoning all kinds of (*micchā*-)*diṭṭhi*; this manifestation of *paññā* is called transcendent *sammā-diṭṭhi*. But the abandoning of all these views does not mean that understanding has been perfected. When the *Atthasālinī* raises the question of the function of *sammā-diṭṭhi* in the higher paths, its problem is not that with stream-attainment the possibilities of knowledge and wisdom have already been exhausted, but simply that the special function of *sammā-diṭṭhi* (i.e. the abandoning of false views) has been accomplished, yet, as everyone knows, the path taught by the Buddha is eightfold and tradition therefore demands that all eight limbs of the path are present not only at stream attainment, but also at the attainment of once-return, non-return and arahatship.

Diṭṭhi/diṭṭhi as cognitive and affective

If we consider the general use of the term *diṭṭhi/diṭṭhi* in Buddhist thought, we see that it combines two logically distinct dimensions: the cognitive and the affective. On the one hand, certain specific views, ways of understanding, that can be expressed in terms of formal propositions about the way things are, are characterised as 'false-views' (*micchā-diṭṭhi*); the most common are *sassatavāda, uccheda-vāda, akiriya-vāda, sakkāya-diṭṭhi*. On the other hand, in certain contexts what seems to be significant about *diṭṭhi* is not so much the cognitive content of a view, but the fact that we cling to it as a dogma, the fact that it becomes a fixed view: this alone is true, all else is foolishness. Thus even so-called 'right views' can be 'views' (*diṭṭhi*) in so

far as they can become fixed and the objects of attachment. Significantly, then, the early texts give us far more details of the cognitive or propositional content of the views we should not hold—the 'false views'—than of the views we should hold—the 'right views'[20]. For to define right view too rigidly and specifically makes for mental rigidity and fixed opinions, when perfect seeing is precisely the transcending of all view points; right view should not be understood as a view itself, but as freedom from all views. This way of thinking is perhaps most clearly expressed in a series of poems found in the *aṭṭhaka-vagga* of the *Suttanipāta*, but is also implicit in the treatment of 'views' more generally in the Nikāyas[21]. We can see the Prajñāpāramitā texts, the Mādhyamikas, Yogācārins and—as Jaini has shown—the Vaibhāṣkas as all in their way trying to articulate this early tradition of Buddhist thought more precisely. What of the Theravādins?

In the light of the fact that (*micchā-*)*diṭṭhi* is presented in the Nikāyas as a certain mental rigidity and opinionatedness, the most striking and significant aspect of the Theravāda Abhidhamma treatment of *diṭṭhi* is the fact that it is considered to be exclusively a concomitant of *citta* rooted in greed (*lobhamūla*): *diṭṭhi* can only be present in the mind when greed or attachment occurs: it is confined to four types of consciousness rooted in greed[22]. In order to form a clearer idea of the understanding the nature of view and its cognitive and affective aspects, it is helpful at this point to consider the registers of terms used in the early Abhidhamma texts, such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga*, to define *diṭṭhi* and *moha* respectively.

The following terms are used to define *diṭṭhi*: gone over to view (*diṭṭhigata*)[23], a thicket of view (*diṭṭhi-gahana*), a wilderness of view (*diṭṭhikantāra*), the contrariness of view (*diṭṭhi-visūkāyika*), the turmoil of view (*diṭṭhi-vipphandita*), the fetter of views (*diṭṭhi-saṃyojana*), holding (*gāha*), fixity (*patiṭṭhāha*)[24], conviction (*abhinivesa*) , clinging (*parāmāsa*), a bad path (*kummagga*), a false way (*micchā-patha*) , falsity (*micchatta*), the realm of (other) systems of crossing over (*titthāyatana*), the hold of the perverted views (*vipariyesa-gāha*)[25]. Most of these terms are drawn from various Nikāya contexts and their precise signification is sometimes unclear; my translations reflect the explanations offered in the *Atthasālinī*, and in fact it is worth quoting these in full:

It is 'gone over to view' because it is a way of seeing that, due to its being included

among the sixty-two wrong views, has gone over to wrong views in the sense of not seeing in accordance with the truth āK View itself is a 'thicket of views' in the sense of being difficult to pass through—like a grass thicket, or a forest thicket or a mountainous region; in the sense of being fearful and dangerous it is a 'wilderness of views'—like a wilderness with bandits and snakes, without food and water; in the sense of overthrowing and conflicting with right view it is the 'contrariness of view', for when the wrong way of seeing occurs it overthrows and conflicts with the right way of seeing. The 'turmoil of view' is the turning to the other form for one who at one time holds the eternalist view and at one time the annihilationist view, for one lost in views is unable to stick with one position, at one time he follows eternalism at another he follows annihilationism. The 'fetter of view' is view itself considered as a fetter in the sense of binding. Because it takes hold of its object firmly as crocodiles and so on take hold of a man, it is 'holding'. As a result of becoming fixed it is fixity. Indeed, by reason of its forceful occurrence, having become fixed it takes hold; and, because it is convinced about permanence and so on, this is 'conviction'. Because it misses the nature of dhammas and insists on holding on by way of the idea of their permanence and so on, it is 'holding on'. A 'bad path' is a path that is vile due to its taking one to what is unbeneficial, or it is a path to the vile descents. As a way that is not in accordance with the truth it is a false way. For even though one who is confused about the way takes a road thinking 'this is certainly the way to such and such village,' it does not bring him to that village, just so , even though one who is lost in view holds a view, thinking 'this is the way to a happy destiny,' it does not bring him to a happy destiny; so a 'false way' is a way not in accordance with the truth. As something that is by nature false its 'falsity'. A 'system of crossing over' is where, just because of their roaming about there, it appears the foolish cross over; and because this is the realm of things unbeneficial, it is the realm of other systems of crossing over. Alternatively the 'realm of other systems of crossing over' is a realm in the sense of the dwelling place and country of birth of those belonging to other systems of crossing over. The 'hold of the perverted views' is a holding on which constitutes a perverted view[26]; alternatively it is holding on because of a perverted view; perverted view is the meaning[27].

While there is certainly some notion of the wrong, mistaken and false content of 'view' in this treatment, two related notions seem to dominate: firstly that view is something that we hold on to, cling to and which thus becomes rigid and fixed;

secondly that view is something we get stuck in, tangled in and lost in. Let me straight away turn to the definition of *moha* before passing further comment.

Delusion (*moha*) is: not knowing (*aññāṇa*), not seeing (*adassana*), not understanding (*anabhisamaya*), not cognising properly (*ananubodha*), not cognising fully (*asambodha*), not penetrating (*appaṭivedha*), not fathoming (*asaṃgāhanā*)[28], not thoroughly fathoming (*apariyogāhanā*), not regarding impartially (*asamapekkhanā*), not reviewing (*apaccavekkhanā*), lack of vision (*apaccakkhakamma*), stupidity (*dummejjha*), foolishness (*bālya*), not clearly knowing (*asampajañña*), delusion (*moha*), strong delusion (*pamoha*), complete delusion (*samoha*), ignorance (*avijjā*), the flood of ignorance (*avijjogha*), the bond of ignorance (*avijjāyoga*), the latent tendency to ignorance (*avijjānusaya*), the manifestation of ignorance (*avijjā-pariyuṭṭhāna*), the barrier of ignorance (*avijjālaṅgī*)[29]. In contrast to the register of terms for *diṭṭhi*, this set of defining terms is dominated by verbal roots connoting knowing and seeing; a further dimension of delusion is suggested by the notion of its not being able to penetrate to and fathom the true nature of things. We should also note that the *Atthasālinī* makes clear that the negative prefix a- should not be interpreted as indicating the mere absence of knowing and seeing, but rather a definite *dhamma* that is opposed (*paṭipakkha*) to knowing and seeing[30]. Ignorance and delusion is thus seen as something that positively obscures the true nature of things. The standard commentarial definitions of *micchā-diṭṭhi* and *moha* further bring out their distinctive characteristics[31]. The characteristic of view is inappropriate conviction (*ayoniso abhinivesa*); its function is clinging (*parāmāsa*); its manifestation is wrong conviction (*micchābhinivesa*); its basis is the absence of a desire to meet the Noble Ones and the like (*ariyānaṃ adassano-kāmatādi*); and it should be seen as the ultimate fault (*paramaṃ vajjaṃ*). Delusion on the other hand has the characteristic of mental blindness (*cittassa andhabhāva-*), or of not knowing (*aññāṇa*); its function is not penetrating (*asampaṭivedha*), or concealing the nature of an object (*ārammaṇa-sabhāva-cchādana*); its manifestation is the absence of right practice (*asammā-paṭipatti*), or blindness (*andhakāra*); its basis is inappropriate bringing to mind (*ayoniso manasikāra*); it should be seen as the root of all that is unskilful (*sabbākusalānaṃ mūlaṃ*).

In sum, then, we can see from a cluster of terms used for *diṭṭhi* (*gāha, patiṭṭhāha abhinivesa, parāmāsa*) that for the Theravādins what is significant about *diṭṭhi* is not

simply that it is a wrong or false way of seeing, but that it is a grasping at or holding onto a particular way of seeing; it is a fixed or rigid view of things. The emphasis in the register of terms for *moha*, on the other hand, is on its not knowing, not seeing, not understanding, on its failure to penetrate (*appaṭivedha*) and get below the surface (*apariyogāhanā*) to the true nature of things[32].

It seems, then, that to at least some extent what the Vaibhāṣkas in their analysis of *diṭṭhi* see as a kind of 'judging' or 'determining' (*santīraṇa*), the Theravādins see as *lobha*. The difference is, however, that for the Vaibhāṣkas a subtle form of this fixity of view continues after stream-attainment in the form of *samyag-diṭṭhi*, while the Theravādins apparently make no provision for its continuation since the greed-delusion that crystallises as *diṭṭhi* is abandoned by the path of stream-attainment. In the Theravāda understanding the tendency to fixed opinion can only exist prior to stream-attainment, since the wisdom of stream-attainment is characterized as *sammā-diṭṭhi*, a form of *paññā* that precisely turns away from the inclination to hold fixed opinions; once the four truths have been directly seen, the mind has no inclination to either eternalism or annihilationism, the mind has no tendency to misinterpret Buddhist theory in terms of either annihilationism or eternalism.

Right view and belief

Some fifty years ago Erich Frauwallner highlighted the fact that at one time (in the formula of the four noble truths) Buddhist thought sees 'thirst' (*tṛṣṇā/taṇhā*) as the root cause of suffering, at another time (in the formula of *pratītyasamutpāda*) ignorance (*avidyā/avijjā*): indeed, he saw this as something of an inconsistency[33]. Yet what Buddhist thought seems to be suggesting here is that what is logically distinct—the cognitive and affective, fact and value—is empirically inextricably bound up together: a mind that does not see in accordance with the truth is a mind that tends to grasp. As long as there is ignorance (a blindness to the reality of impermanence, suffering and not-self), there is a tendency for the mind to continue in its perverse insistence that what is impermanent as permanent, what is suffering as happiness, what is not self as self, and what is ugly as beautiful. And this is precisely where the notion of *diṭṭhi* comes in, for it combines both the root causes of suffering: ignorance and greed.

In order to gain a proper understanding of view we need to think carefully about the

psychology involved in *diṭṭhi*. Buddhist tradition catalogues a number of wrong-views, but clearly it is not necessary to consciously hold precisely those views in order to be bound up in *diṭṭhi*. The manner in which the Buddhist tradition, from the *Brahmajāla Sutta* to the Madhyamaka, has a tendency to reduce all views to either annihilationism or eternalism, indicates how certain ways of understanding amount to annihilationism or eternalism; in other words, it is possible for us to form an annihilationist or an eternalist understanding in our own minds of a teaching that is intended to be neither. Indeed, the Suttas precisely tell us that some misinterpret what the Buddha teaches as annihilationism[34]; similarly the Prajñāpāramitā and Nāgārjuna suggest that others—this time 'Buddhists'—misunderstand what they are trying to say and accuse them of destroying the Buddha's teaching[35]. What all this implies is that (false) view is as much a matter of the psychology and emotional attitude of the person holding a view as it is of the formal content of the view. The Buddhist tradition recognises that what is formally Buddhist theory can be grasped and held in a manner such that it constitutes wrong view.

On the kind of understanding which defines *sammā-diṭṭhi* simply as the occurrence of *paññā* or wisdom, and *micchā-diṭṭhi* or false view as an occurrence of something altogether different, namely a particular psychological crystallization of delusion and greed (which is the understanding that underlies the Theravāda Abhidhamma), as a matter of definition *sammā-diṭṭhi* can never be *diṭṭhi*. That is, in spite of the fact that the same word is being used, for the Theravāda Abhidhamma *diṭṭhi* and *sammādiṭṭhi* are not to be seen as different species of the same beast, but essentially different, and in fact *sammā-diṭṭhi* shares none of the characteristic qualities of *diṭṭhi*. In the Vaibhāṣka Abhidharma, on the other hand, *samyag-dṛṣṭi* and *mithyā-dṛṣṭi* do share the characteristic 'view' quality since they both involve conceptual judgement (*santīrika*). This means that *samyag-dṛṣṭi prajñā* and *sammā-diṭṭhi/paññā* are conceived of rather differently in the Vaibhāṣka and Theravāda Abhidharmas. For the Vaibhāṣikas it appears that *samyag-dṛṣṭi* can be understood as a kind of correct belief or judgement based, in the case of the stream-attainer, on direct experience of the facts (impermanence, suffering and not-self). Possibly in the case of the ordinary follower of the Buddha's teaching, the Vaibhāṣkas understand *samyag-dṛṣṭi* as equivalent to a correct belief or opinion that is merely in accordance with the facts, that is, a theoretical understanding of impermanence, suffering and not-self rather than one based on direct experience. Yet for the Theravāda Abhidhamma it seems

that *sammā-diṭṭhi* is never to be conceived of as correct opinion or belief, whether based on theoretical understanding or direct experience.

In the context of a discussion of *jñāna* in Yogācāra texts Paul Griffiths has recently pointed out that whereas contemporary anglophone philosophers tend to take 'knowledge' as denoting either 'a propositional attitude' (i.e. an attitude, whether occurrent or dispositional, which someone has towards some proposition) or justified true belief, Yogācāra writers take *jñāna* as something which is instanced as 'episodic mental events with cognitive significance', and give no hint that *jñāna* can be used to describe assent to some claim or proposition[36]. These important observations are equally relevant, I think, to the understanding of *sammā-diṭṭhi/paññā* found in the Theravāda Abhidhamma. Since Buddhist texts furnish *micchā-diṭṭhi* with a formal content, it is all too tempting—perhaps because of the intellectual and cultural assumptions indicated by Griffiths—to assume that *sammā-diṭṭhi* has a formal content which is precisely the inverse of *micchā-diṭṭhi*, and that 'right view' thus consists in a propositional attitude (whether dispositional or occurrent) towards that content: right-view consists in assent to the claim that things are permanent, suffering and not self, to the claim that the five aggregates are suffering, the cause of suffering is craving, the cessation of suffering is the cessation of craving and that the way leading to the cessation of suffering is the eightfold path, and so on. Indeed, Steven Collins, in a helpful survey of the Nikāya usage of the term, has suggested that *sammā-diṭṭhi*, in addition to being understood as a liberating knowledge that transcends all views, is used to denote first of all a 'pro-attitude' towards the general ideas of karma and rebirth, and secondly a knowledge of or acquaintance with certain basic points of Buddhist doctrine such as the four noble truths and dependent arising[37].

Whether or not this is a correct reading of the Nikāya usage of *sammā-diṭṭhi* (I remain doubtful), it is clear that it simply does not work for the early Abhidhamma texts. Thus when the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* states that right-view occurs as a mental-concomitant of ordinary, sense-sphere, skilful consciousness—a kind of consciousness that the commentaries suggest might occur when we give a gift, or turn away from harming a living creature or taking what is not given, or perform some other meritorious and auspicious action—it is not suggesting the occurrence of a dispositional attitude towards the propositions of Buddhist teaching, nor acquaintance with basic Buddhist doctrine, nor even a theoretical understanding of Buddhist doctrine[38]. Rather we

must take what it says at face value: the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is claiming that at the time of the occurrence of that consciousness some kind of direct awareness of the nature of suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation occurs. What I am suggesting then is that for a text such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the occurrence of ordinary (*lokiya*) 'right view' does not necessarily have anything to do with acquaintance with or knowledge of Buddhist doctrine per se; indeed, if this were not the case then the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* would be claiming that only Buddhists could ever experience ordinary skilful consciousness associated with 'knowledge' (*ñāṇa*), only 'Buddhists' (in the sense of those familiar with Buddhist doctrine) could ever give with some sort of awareness that it is good (*kusala*) to give. Of course, it is not impossible that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is making just such a claim, but this is not the natural way to take the text, and such a claim would make it difficult for the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* to explain how any one could ever want to become a 'Buddhist'.

From the perspective of Abhidhamma, what we generally refer to as belief or opinion must, I think, be analysed as the occurence of a state of mind in which there is an attachment or clinging to some proposition or theory. If that attachment is directed towards a proposition generally approved by the Buddhist tradition—a prosoposition such as 'actions have results'—then there is a sense in which the belief or opinion might be regarded, from the Buddhist view point, as 'correct belief'; but such a state of mind remains quite different from actually seeing that actions have results. Attachment to some opinions may be generally more profitable than attachment to others, but it is nonetheless attachment. Rather than the occurrence of a mere belief or opinion in the flow of mental states, *sammā-diṭṭhi* is presented in the Abhidhamma as in some manner always be a direct seeing of the four truths, and never simply a 'pro-attitude' towards or belief in, say, the four truths. For the Abhidhamma analysis, such a pro-attitude, if free from attachment and hence skilful, is possibly to be understood in terms of 'faith' (*saddhā*); if rooted in attachment, it must be considered unskilful and possibly even as *diṭṭhi*. Thus the mental processes involved in someone agreeing with the proposition that actions have results, do not necessarily entail any occurrence of even ordinary (*lokiya*) *sammā-diṭṭhi*. In fact, they might from the point of view of Abhidhamma be entirely akusala. On the other hand, we may fleetingly see and understand that actions do indeed have results without the proposition 'actions have results' ever being consciously formulated in our minds. I am suggesting here

something that is, in Vaibhāṣka terms, essentially 'beyond judgement' (*asaṃtīrika*).

If, in some sense, we directly see the four truths whenever the *dhamma* that is termed *paññā* occurs, why do we not immediately become stream-attainers or even arahats? I suggested above that the Theravāda Abhidharma, like other systems of Abhidharma, recognized different degrees or intensities of *paññā*. This raises a question that appears in various forms and guises through the history of Buddhist thought—the question of gradual or sudden awakening: is it possible to only half (or a tenth) understand the four truths? I think the Abhidharma understanding of these matters, works along the following lines: in ordinary consciousness we do indeed directly see the four truths, but for various reasons (and the reasons are necessarily psychologically deep, subtle and complex) we wilfully ignore what we have seen; in effect it passes us by and we are unaffected and unchanged by it. In this sense seeing the four truths is like seeing anything else. I may look at the same view on different occasions but be quite differently affected by it on each occasion. What is significant about the path of stream attainment, however, is that it is a direct seeing of the four truths that does affect us; in fact it changes us forever.

1 Louis de La Vallée Poussin (trans.), *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu: Traduction et Annotations*, 6 vols (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1971); English translation by Leo M. Pruden, 4 vols (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988). Frauwallner's studies were originally published in WZKSO 7 (1963), 20–36; 8 (1964), 59–99; 15 (1971), 69–121; 16 (1972), 95–152; 17 (1973), 97–121; they have recently been translated into English and published in book form as *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

2 *The Buddhist Analysis of Matter* (Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1967).

3 In *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*, edited by Lewis Lancaster (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), pp. 403–15.

4 According to Jaini's chart (p. 411) these five are classed as such, but this is not stated explicitly in the body of the article. That these five are are considered *asantīraka* and thus prior to investigation and judgement in fact corresponds to the position of *santīraṇa* in the Theravāda understanding of the consciousness process (*citta-vīthi*).

5 Dhs 9, 26–36, 55–6, 60, 74–5, 96–9, 116–7, 122–4; that is, of the eighty-nine classes of citta listed in the later Abhidhamma, a total of forty-seven are associated with *paññā*.

6 Dhs 11 (§ 16), 14 (§ 37): *paññā pajānatā vicayo pavicayo dhammavicayo sallakkhaṇā upalakkhaṇā paccupalakkhaṇā paṇḍiccaṃ kosallaṃ nepuññaṃ vebhavyā cintā upaparikkhā bhuri medhā parināyikā. VipassanŒ sampaja—aṃ patodo paññā pa—indriyaṃ paññābalaṃ paññāsatthaṃ paññāpāsādo paññāŒloko paññāobhāso paññāpajjoto paññāratanaṃ amoho dhammavicayo sammādiṭṭhi.*

7 D II 311; M III 251; S v 8–10, 196–200; Paṭis I 40–2; Vibh 104–5, 235–6; cf. R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhi-Pakkhiyā Dhammā* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 119, 190.

8 'Bhavāaiga and Rebirth According to the Abhidhamma' in *The Buddhist Forum*, Vol. III, edited by T. Skorupski and U. Pagel (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994), pp. 11–35.

9 Compare the definitions of *sammā-diṭṭhi* at Dhs 14 (§ 37) and 63 (§ 297).

10 Again compare the definitions of *sammā-diṭṭhi* at Dhs 14 (§ 37) and 63 (§ 297).

[11] M III 72.

[12] *atthi dinnaṃ atthi yiṭṭaṃ atthi hutaṃ atthi sukaṭadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko atthi ayaṃ loko atthi paro loko atthi mātā atthi pitā atthi sattā opapātikā atthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imaṃ ca lokaṃ paraṃ ca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedenti*, The reverse of this—the view that there is no such thing as giving, etc.—Vibh 392 terms 'wrong view consisting of ten points' (*dasavatthukā micchādiṭṭhi*).

[13] Ps IV 131.

[14] As 241.

[15] As 245.

[16] The precise nature of the distinction that Jaini is trying to make between 'understanding attained' and 'defilements overcome' is unclear to me. Jaini's distinction is in part reminiscent of the kind of distinction found especially in Yogācāra writings between defilements as obstacles in themselves (*kleśāvaraṇa*) and the obstacles to knowledge (*jñeyāvaraṇa*), but the progression here—the defilements are overcome while the obstacles to knowledge remain to be abandoned by the higher stages of the bodhisattva path—is the reverse of the one Jaini suggests is assumed by Theravāda texts, namely that full knowledge is gained while defilements yet remain to be overcome.

[17] Dhs 60 (§ 277), 74–5 (§§ 362, 363, 364); cf. commentary at As 214, 238–9: 'With regard to the third path, "for the sake of abandoning without remainder" means "for the purpose of abandoning with no remainder the fetters weakened by the path of oncereturn".'

[18] Note that Dhs takes *parāmāsa* as an alternative term for *diṭṭhi* (see below).

[19] The ten fetters are *sakkāya-diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata-parāmāsa, kāma-cchanda, vyāpāda, rūpa-rāga, arūpa-rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā*. The stream-attainer abandons the first three; the once returner abandons the first three and further weakens greed hatred and delusion; the non-returner abandons the lower five; the arahat abandons all ten (e.g. M I 141–2). Nett 14 refers to the first seven as forming a distinct group. Cf. As 376–7.

[20] The *khuddhaka-vatthu* section of the *Vibhaṅga* details some 111 kinds of (wrong) view; there is some overlap here, but the vast majority (102) concern, directly or indirectly, some sort of view about the nature of the 'self'. The most significant views not concerned with the

self are wrong view that consists in ten points (see above n. 15) and the only view for which are a *bhikkhu* can be censured in the Vinaya, namely *assāda-diṭṭhi* or the view that there is no fault in sense pleasures (*natthi kāmesu doso ti*) (see Vibh 368, Vin IV 134–5). Perhaps the fullest definition of the positive content of 'right view' in the Nikāyas is found in the *Apaṇṇaka Sutta* (M I 400–13); this largely takes the form of an expansion of the stock formula used in the *Mahācattārīaka Sutta* to define 'ordinary' right view (see n. 14); otherwise right view is defined in the context of the explanation of the eightfold path as knowledge of suffering, its arising, its cessation and the way leading to its cessation (see n. 9).

21 See Luis O. G—mez, 'Proto-Mādhyamika in the Pāli Canon', *Philosophy East and West*, 26 (1976), 137–65; Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 120–31.

22 Dhs 75, 80–2.

23 The use of gata at the end of compounds is often largely pleonastic, but I have translated it as 'gone over to' in order to facilitate the translation of the commentarial explanation below.

24 E^e has *patiggāho*, but C^e and As have *patiṭṭhāho*.

25 e.g. Dhs 78 (§ 381).

26 The four *vipariyesas/vipallāsas* consist of the perverted idea (*saññā*), mind (*citta*) and view (*diṭṭhi*) that sees what is permanent in what is impermanent, what is happiness in what is suffering, what is self in what is not self, what is beautiful in what is ugly (see e.g. Vibh 376).

27 As 252–53: *ayāthāva-dassanaṭṭhena micchā-diṭṭhisu gataṃ idaṃ dassanaṃ dvāsaṭṭhi-diṭṭhi-antogatattā ti diṭṭhi-gataṃ āK diṭṭhi yeva duratikkamaṭṭhena diṭṭhi-gahaṇaṃ tiṇa-gahaṇaṃ vana-gahaṇaṃ pabbata-gahaṇāni viya; sāsaṅka-sappaṭibhayaṭṭhena diṭṭhi-kantāro corakantāra-vālakantāra-nirudakakantāra-dubbhikkhākantārā viya. sammādiṭṭhiyā vinivijjhanaṭṭhena vilomanaṭṭhena ca diṭṭhi-visūkāyikaṃ; micchā-dassanaṃ hi uppajjamānaṃ sammā-dassanaṃ vinivijjhati c'eva vilometi ca. kadāci sassatassa kadāci ucchedassa gahaṇato diṭṭhiyā virūpaṃ phanditan ti diṭṭhi-vipphanditaṃ; diṭṭhigatiko hi ekasmiṃ patiṭṭhātuṃ na sakkoti, kadāci sassataṃ anupatati kadāci ucchedaṃ. diṭṭhi yeva bandhanaṭṭhena saṃyojanan ti diṭṭhi-saṃyojanaṃ. suṃsumārādayo viya purisaṃ ārammaṇaṃ daḷhaṃ gaṇhāti ti gāho. patiṭṭhahanato patiṭṭhāho; ayaṃ hi balava-ppavatti-bhāvena patiṭṭhahitvā gaṇhāti ti. niccādi-vasena abhinivisatī ti abhiniveso. dhamma-sabhāvaṃ atikkamitvā niccādi-vasena parato āmasati ti parāmāso. anatthāvahattā kucchito maggo, kucchitānaṃ vā apāyānaṃ maggo ti kummaggo. ayāthāva-pathato micchā-patho: yathā hi disā-mūlhena ayaṃ asuka-gāmassa*

*pi diṭṭhi sugatiṃ na pāpet' ti ayāthāva-patho ti micchā-patho. micchā-sabhāvato micchattaṃ.
tatth'eva paribbhhamaṇato taranti ettha bālā ti titthaṃ c'etaṃ anatthānañ ca āyatanan ti
titthāyatanaṃ; titthiyānaṃ vā sañjāti-desaṭṭhena nivāsa-ṭṭhānaṭṭhena ca āyatanan ti pi
titthāyatanaṃ. vipariyesa-bhūto vipariyesa-gāho vipariyesasato vā gāho ti vipariyesa-gāho;
vipallattha-gāho ti attho.*

28 As 254 explains this as *sāmaññato na gaṇhāti*, but the term *(a)samgāhaṇā* is not listed in
PED, but the form of the word suggests a derivation from *gāh-* (to plunge into) rather than
grah- (to seize); such a derivation is reinforced by the next term in the regeister, *apariyogāhṇā*,
which As defines as na *pariyogāhati*. CPD does list *asamgāhaṇā* and derives it from *gāh-*.

29 e.g. Dhs 78 (§390).

30 Cf. B. K. Matilal, 'Ignorance or Misconception? – A Note on AvidyŒ in Buddhism' in
Somaratna Balasooriya et al. (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London:
Gordon Fraser, 1980), 154–64.

31 Vism XIV 163–64; As 249.

32 Vism XVII 52 makes a distinction between two types of *avijjā*: *appaṭipatti* and *micchā-
paṭipatti*; Vism-mhṭ (Nᵉ) 1220–1221 explains that the former consists in not knowing suffering,
etc. and is disassociated from *diṭṭhi*, while the latter consists in the vipallŒsas and is associated
with *diṭṭhi*.

33 Erich Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie* (Salzburg, 1953) ı 195–212.

34 e.g. M I 140.

35 e.g. Madhyamaka-kārikā XIV 6–11.

36 P. J. Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany, NY:
State University of New York Press, 1994), 151–3.

37 op. cit., pp. 88–90.

38 The nature of 'theoretical understanding' according to the Abhidhamma is complex and
connected with the Abhidhamma treatment of *paññatti* or 'concept' as one of the possible
classes of objects of consciousness; see A.K arder, 'The Concept', Journal of Indian Philosophy
1 (1971), pp. 181–96.

The *Mātikās:* Memorization, Mindfulness, and the List

RUPERT GETHIN

Nikāya Lists and Mnemonic Technique

Most people coming into contact with Buddhist literature and thought outside traditional Buddhist cultures are probably struck by the fact that it seems to be full of lists. Indeed, nearly all introductory accounts of Buddhism straight away present the reader with two fundamental Buddhist lists: that of the noble eightfold path (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*) and that of the four noble truths (*ariya-sacca*). This is only the beginning. Very soon one gains the impression that Buddhism has a convenient list for everything: the three jewels, the five aggregates, the five precepts, the eight noble persons, the ten fetters, the ten unwholesome courses of action, and so on.

It is apparent that much of the scriptural sutta material preserved in the four primary Nikāyas can be regarded as exposition based around lists of one sort or another, and that very many suttas might be resolved into and summed up in terms of their component lists. The reason why the noble eightfold path and the four noble truths feature so regularly in introductory accounts of Buddhism is because, according to tradition, these two lists formed the basis of the Buddha's first discourse outside Benares. But why are there so many other lists in Buddhist thought and literature? A number of writers have drawn attention to the usefulness of these lists as mnemonic devices,[1] and it seems clear that the proliferation of lists in early Buddhist literature has something to do with its being an "oral literature"—a "literature" that was composed orally and only subsequently became fixed in the form of written texts. Of course, in the Indian cultural context Buddhist literature is not uniquely or peculiarly "oral," rather Indian culture as a whole is in origin "oral";[2] indeed, a penchant for analyzing something in terms of a neat categorized list is characteristic of much of traditional Indian learning, and the oral origins of Indian learning continued to inform its structure long after its exponents had begun to commit it to writing.

One only has to reflect for a minute on the difficulties of composing a talk or a discourse without the aid of pen and paper, or without access to computers and word processors, to begin to appreciate what a convenient solution the list is. A list immediately imparts to the discourse a structure that makes

it more easily remembered by the one giving the talk. At the same time a talk based on lists is easier to follow and remember for those listening. With a list one has a certain safeguard against losing one's way in a talk or forgetting sections of it. Thus if I go to a talk by the Buddha on the noble eightfold path and later find I can only remember five of the eight "limbs," then, provided that I remember that buddhas always talk about *eight*fold paths, I will at least know that I have forgotten something and do not remember the talk in full.

Lists may be a feature of ancient Indian literatures in general, but it is probably true to say that no one makes quite as much of lists as the Buddhists. At this point I should like to try to explore some of the ways in which Buddhist literature forms itself around lists and consider how these lists proliferate and interconnect. An obvious starting point is the list of the four noble truths. The bare statement of this list is as follows:

> The four noble truths: the noble truth that is suffering, the noble truth that is the origin of suffering, the noble truth that is the ceasing of suffering, the noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering.[3]

In various places in the Nikāyas this bare and concise statement of the four noble truths is explained:

> This, monks, is the noble truth that is suffering: birth is suffering; growing old is suffering; illness is suffering; dying is suffering; sorrow, grief, pain, unhappiness and weariness are suffering; association with what is not liked is suffering; dissociation from what is liked is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in short the five aggregates of grasping are suffering.

> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the origin of suffering: that thirst for repeated existence, accompanied by delight and passion and delighting in this and that, namely thirst for the objects of sensual desire, thirst for existence, thirst for nonexistence.

> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the ceasing of suffering: the complete fading away and ceasing of this very thirst, its abandoning, relinquishing, releasing, letting go.

> This, monks, is the noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering: this noble eightfold path, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.[4]

It is immediately apparent that this explanation of the four truths keys into a

to the list of the five aggregates of grasping (*upādāna-kkhanda*); the second truth is explained in terms of various kinds of "thirst" that, by the close of the Nikāya period, achieve the status of list in their own right—"the three thirsts" (*taṇhā*);[5] the third truth consists in the ceasing of these very same three thirsts; finally the fourth truth is classically summed up as the noble eightfold path. So at the first stage of analysis the list of the four truths links into three further lists.

Having been told that "suffering" is the five aggregates of grasping, we need to know what precisely they are. They are listed in very many Nikāya contexts: physical form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), recognition (*saññā*), volitions (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).[6] Various definitions of these five categories are offered, definitions that in turn refer to still more Nikāya lists. Thus "physical form" is the four "great essentials," namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air;[7] "feeling" consists of the three feelings that are pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful;[8] "recognition" can be of six sorts, namely, of shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations, and ideas;[9] there are three "volitions," namely, the volitions of body, speech, and mind;[10] depending on the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind, "consciousness" can be of six sorts.[11] Alternatively, both feeling and volitions can also be of six sorts: feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind and volition associated with shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily sensations, or ideas.[12] These explanations by way of six classes based on the six senses tie in with another favorite Nikāya list, that of the six "(sense-)spheres" (*āyatana*).[13] Appropriately enough, the first truth is occasionally summed up, not in terms of the five aggregates, but in terms of these six sense spheres.[14]

Like the first truth, the fourth truth also demands and receives considerable elaboration. The noble truth that is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering is said to consist of eight "limbs." Once more these eight limbs are explained in more detail elsewhere in the Nikāyas, and once more the explanations make free reference to yet more Nikāya lists.[15] Thus right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) is knowledge of suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its ceasing—in other words, knowledge of the four truths. Right thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*) is explained in terms of three kinds of thought, namely, thoughts that are free from desire, free from hatred, and free from cruelty; these feature in the *Saṅgītisutta* as "three wholesome thoughts."[16] Right speech (*sammā-vācā*) is speech that refrains from wrong speech, devisive speech, hurtful speech, and idle chatter, and is thus of four kinds. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*) is action that refrains from attacking living beings, taking what is not given, and noncelibacy, and is thus of three kinds. Right livelihood is explained simply as "abandoning wrong livelihood and making a living by means of right livelihood." Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)

is explained by way of a stock Nikāya formula detailing four kinds of effort that are elsewhere called "the four right endeavors" (*cattāro sammappadhānā*).[17] Right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) is explained by another stock Nikāya formula detailing the four kinds of contemplation (*anupassanā*) that are usually called "the four applications of mindfulness" (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*).[18] Lastly, right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) is explained by way of the stock description of the successive attainment of the four "meditations" or *jhānas*.

The quest for explanation and exposition may be taken further still, linking in to yet more Nikāya lists. The detailed exposition of the four applications of mindfulness as found in the (*Mahā*) *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* is particularly fruitful ground in this respect. The first application of mindfulness, "contemplation of body with regard to body" (*kāye kāyānupassanā*), consists of various exercises. There is the fourfold practice of mindfulness of breathing (a subject that is itself expanded in other Nikāya contexts).[19] There is the practice of clearly knowing when one is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down; these four postures are elsewhere called "the four ways of going."[20] There is the practice of reflecting on the body as full of different kinds of impurity by way of a stock list of thirty-one parts of the body.[21] There is the practice of reflecting on the four elements. There is the practice of comparing one's body to a corpse in nine different states of putrefaction; this list of nine states, it would seem, is adapted to give a list of ten "uglinesses" (*asubha*) that becomes standard for the canonical Abhidhamma and the commentaries.[22]

The practice of the second application of mindfulness, "contemplation of feeling with regard to feeling" (*vedanāsu vedanānupassanā*), revolves around the contemplation of the three kinds of feeling mentioned above. The exposition of the third application of mindfulness, "contemplation of mind with regard to mind" (*citte cittānupassanā*), although it does not use a standard Nikāya list, does follow a strictly numerical structure based around the distinction of sixteen kinds of mind in eight pairs. Finally, the practice of the fourth application of mindfulness, "the contemplation of Dhamma with regard to dhammas" (*dhammesu dhammānupassanā*), involves the contemplation of such old favorites as the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), the five aggregates, the six sense-spheres, the seven awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*), and the four noble truths.
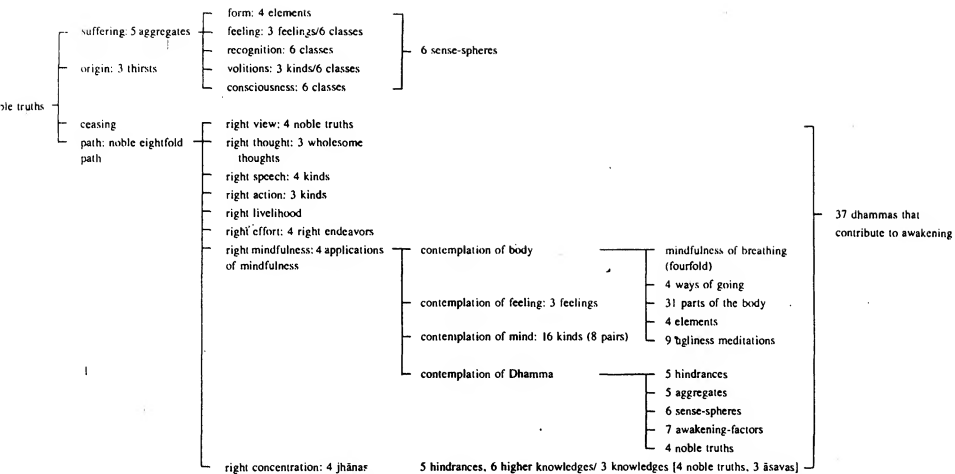
Continuing this pursuit of Nikāya lists, I shall return briefly to the eighth limb of the path, right concentration. Right concentration led us to the stock description of the four meditations (*jhānas*). This appears to be a condensed version of a fuller description that forms the center piece of what probably should be regarded as the classic Nikāya account of the Buddhist path.[23] In

this context the attainment of the four meditations is immediately prefaced by
the abandoning of the five hindrances; in the *Dīgha* version it is followed by
the attainment of what are later known as the six higher knowledges
(*abhiññā*), in the *Majjhima* version by what are later known as the three
knowledges (*vijjā*).[24] The last of these, in both cases, involves knowledge of
what constitutes suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its
ceasing; we are back with the four noble truths. Also involved is the mind's
being released from defilements in their most radical form, that of the three
"influxes" or *āsavas*.[25] So, while the description of the meditations does not
obviously subsume any further Nikāya lists, it does lead us to some additional
lists by means of strong associations.

I shall conclude this exploration of Nikāya lists to be derived from the
four noble truths by citing an *Aṅguttaranikāya* passage. The fourth truth is
usually explained by reference to the noble eightfold path; according to the
Buddha's first discourse the eightfold path is to be understood as the "middle
way" between the extremes of devotion to sensual pleasure and devotion to
self-torment. But, says the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, this middle way can also be seen
as the four applications of mindfulness, the four right endeavors, the four
bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, or the seven awakening-
factors.[26] Together with the noble eightfold path we have here, then, seven
sets of items that are classically referred to in the postcanonical literature as
the "thirty-seven dhammas that contribute to awakening" (*satta-tiṃsa bodhi-
pakkhiyā dhammā*).[27]

The results of this exercise in deriving lists from the traditional treatment
of the noble truths can be conveniently summed up with a tree diagram (see
Figure 1). It is important to note that this exercise was concluded at a more
or less arbitrary point. In principle the process of drawing out lists might have
been continued indefinitely; certain avenues were not fully explored, while at
several points we arrive back where we started, with the four noble truths,
allowing us to begin the whole process again. What this illustrates is how one
Nikāya list acts as a veritable matrix for a whole series of further lists. We
may begin with one simple list, but the structure of early Buddhist thought
and literature dictates that we end up with an intricate pattern of lists within
lists, which sometimes turns back on itself and repeats itself, the parts sub-
suming the whole.

It should perhaps be stressed that we are not immediately concerned
here with the chronology of the evolution of the Nikāya lists; what concerns
us is how the literature might have looked to an ancient monk around the
close of the Nikāya period. Our perspective is thus synchronic; it assumes the
existence of the whole Nikāya corpus. However, it seems to me that there are

suffering: 5 aggregates

- form: 4 elements
- feeling: 3 feelings/6 classes
- recognition: 6 classes
- volitions: 3 kinds/6 classes
- consciousness: 6 classes

— 6 sense-spheres

origin: 3 thirsts

ble truths

ceasing

path: noble eightfold path

- right view: 4 noble truths
- right thought: 3 wholesome thoughts
- right speech: 4 kinds
- right action: 3 kinds
- right livelihood
- right effort: 4 right endeavors
- right mindfulness: 4 applications of mindfulness
  - contemplation of body
    - mindfulness of breathing (fourfold)
    - 4 ways of going
    - 31 parts of the body
    - 4 elements
    - 9 ugliness meditations
  - contemplation of feeling: 3 feelings
  - contemplation of mind: 16 kinds (8 pairs)
  - contemplation of Dhamma
    - 5 hindrances
    - 5 aggregates
    - 6 sense-spheres
    - 7 awakening-factors
    - 4 noble truths
- right concentration: 4 jhānas   5 hindrances, 6 higher knowledges/ 3 knowledges [4 noble truths, 3 āsavas]

37 dhammas that contribute to awakening

Figure 1. *Tree diagram illustrating the Nikāya use of lists*

two basic ways in which the lists evolved and proliferated. Obviously certain lists—such as the lists of the four truths, the eightfold path, the five aggregates of grasping, and the six sense-spheres—are more fundamental than others. I mean by this that they stand in their own right and for the most part evolved independently of each other. It is only subsequently that they are fitted together in the way I have tried to trace earlier (e.g., the first truth comes to be understood in terms of the five aggregates or the six sense-spheres, the fourth truth in terms of the eightfold path). Other lists appear to evolve out of the practice of taking an item or category in an already existing list and explaining it by way of a carefully structured "analysis" (*vibhaṅga*), which in turn can then be conveniently summed up numerically as a list. Thus the "analysis" of the eightfold path does not explicitly state that right thought consists of "the three thoughts," rather it simply gives what is in effect a threefold analysis of right thought; nevertheless, as we have seen, an explicit list of "three wholesome thoughts" does occur in the *Saṅgītisutta*. Other numerically structured analyses, such as the one found under the heading of the third application of mindfulness, appear never to achieve the status of outright list.

Two general observations can be made at this point by way of summary. First, just by remembering the list of the four noble truths one has a point of access into a vast body of Nikāya teaching on all sorts of topics; in other words, we can see how the lists operate as a basic mnemonic device enabling one to remember a lot of material. There appear to be three principal ways in which the lists do this: (1) a list subsumes another list (e.g., the list of the four truths subsumes the list of the five aggregates under the category of the first truth); (2) one list may be substituted for another in a given context (e.g., under the category of the first truth the six sense-spheres can be substituted for the five aggregates); (3) one list may suggest another list by association in important Nikāya contexts (e.g., the four meditations suggests the five hindrances). There follows from this a second and perhaps more significant point. Using the lists is not merely an aid to learning the Dhamma by rote, as it were; on the contrary, the lists help one to learn the Dhamma with a view to its inner structure and dynamic. For the lists essentially are not just lists to be listed one after another, but fit together to form a pattern. Thus to learn and know the lists is to learn and know how they fit together, how they interconnect to form the structure and pattern of the Dhamma that is "beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, beautiful in the end."

This has certain implications for our understanding of the evolution of both early Buddhist literature and thought. The lists actually inform and to some extent govern the structure of the literature. Taking the example set out above, suppose someone decides to give a discourse on the four noble

exposition, following through and expanding in full all the subdivisions and secondary and tertiary lists I have indicated. Or she might give a bare and concise account of the four truths. Then again she might decide to focus on and expound in full only one branch, ending up with an expanded talk on, say, the first application of mindfulness (contemplation of body)[28] or the abandoning of the hindrances and the attainment of the first meditation; in such cases the underlying structure of the four truths need not be very obvious or explicit, but it could still serve as a touchstone for the person giving the talk. In this way, it seems to me, the lists not only aid mechanical memorization (learning by rote), but act as a kind of flowchart for the composition of a discourse. They indicate the various paths and themes that the composer can choose to follow and expand as she feels appropriate. The matrix of interconnecting lists provides a form or structure within which she can improvise. Provided she knows the structure well and is endowed with a certain skill, she can be confident she will not lose her way.

The Pāli canon has come down to us as a fixed literary text, but clearly was not always so. Given the model of interlinking lists, one can easily see how there might be a version of a sutta mentioning the four applications of mindfulness as a bare list, and another version mentioning them with a brief exposition, and yet another version that goes on to give a very full exposition. Such a state of affairs highlights the difficulties about entering into arguments about the "original" version of a sutta, for example, in the context of comparative research between the Pāli Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas.

The *peyyālas* or "repetition" sections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas are particularly interesting in this respect. Here the texts, as we have them, indicate an initial pattern or formula that is to be applied to various items in succession. The result is a text with quite radical abbreviations. Indeed, it is not always clear from the manuscripts and editions we have just how much we are meant to expand the material to get the "full" text. Perhaps a certain freedom is intended here; the *peyyāla* sections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas can appear to read more like guidelines for oral recitation and composition than a fixed literary text.

The *Mātikās* and the Development of the Abhidhamma

Early Buddhist literature contains, then, a great number of lists. Clearly certain lists are more significant than others; some lists occur perhaps in only one context, whereas others crop up again and again. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising to find, at a relatively early date, the Buddhist tradition itself focusing on particular groups of lists and drawing up composite lists; that is, lists of lists. Probably one of the earliest such composite lists is the

group of seven sets of items, already mentioned, that later came to be collectively known as "the thirty-seven dhammas that contribute to awakening." One might also mention the group comprising the five aggregates, the twelve sense-spheres, and the eighteen elements (*khandhāyatana-dhātu*).[29]

Other early lists of lists include the *Kumārapañha* and the *Mahāpañha*,[30] and, of course, the more extended *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas. In the compilation of these composite lists two methods seem to be employed: (1) in the first place one can make a convenient mnemonic summary of an aspect of the Dhamma by an apposite grouping of lists (e.g., the seven sets of items); (2) in the second place one can make a rather more general summary by employing the principles of numerical association (i.e., bringing together different lists that all comprise the same number of items) and/or numerical progression (i.e., taking a list comprising one item, then a list comprising two items, and so on up to ten or eleven items). Examples where the latter method is employed include the *Saṅgītisutta, Dasuttarasutta, Kumārapañha,* and *Mahāpañha.* In effect these are also the two methods adopted by the great collections of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas.

These composite lists are no doubt intended to function as succinct compendia of the Dhamma, but at the same time they also appear to be regarded as representing a kind of distilled essence of the Dhamma; the act of reducing suttas to lists was seen, I think, as laying the Dhamma bare and revealing its inner workings. Thus the various composite lists might be viewed as different ways of getting at the structure lying at the very heart of the Dhamma. In undertaking the task of compiling these composite lists the early Buddhist tradition appears to have felt that it was not quite enough simply to list the lists one after another, for, as we have already seen, to understand the lists is to know where they fit in the whole scheme of the Dhamma. Certainly the *Saṅgītisutta*'s method of arrangement appears simply to bring together all lists containing the same number of items, starting with "ones" and ending with "tens," and it is hard to see in this much more than a convenient mnemonic device for remembering a large number of lists. Yet such an exercise as is carried out by the *Saṅgītisutta* is, I think, always looked on as preliminary: it sets out material that is then to be employed and applied in various ways. Significantly the *Saṅgītisutta* is immediately followed by the *Dasuttarasutta,* which, while also using the principles of numerical association and progression, adapts them to produce a system for placing an entire series of lists (100 to be exact) within a structure that precisely indicates the role each plays in the Dhamma as a whole. What is interesting is that if we compare the Pāli version of that text with the corresponding versions of the *Daśottarasūtra* that survive in Buddhist Sanskrit and Chinese translation we find that in a number of places various alternative lists have been slotted in.[31] This seems to me a very good illustration of why we should not think in terms of an "original"

or "correct" version of such a text. Rather, what we have here is a mnemonic technique and system of arrangement built around numerical association and progression; this technique and system goes beyond mere learning by rote, yielding a structure within which, provided one knows what one is doing, it is perfectly legitimate to improvise as one feels appropriate.

Towards the close of the Nikāya period we find a rather interesting term being employed in the literature: the term *mātikā*. In the four primary Nikāyas and the Vinaya Piṭaka this term is characteristically found as the first member of the compound *mātikā-dhara;*[32] this in turn always occurs as the third term in the sequence *dhamma-dhara vinaya-dhara mātikā-dhara* that forms part of a stock description of the accomplished monk: he is "one who has heard much, one to whom the tradition has been handed down, learned in the Dhamma, learned in the Vinaya, learned in the *mātikā*."[33] We also find the term *mātrkā* similarly employed in Buddhist Sanskrit sources.[34] But what exactly is a *mātikā*? Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE) understands *mātikā* in the context of *mātikā-dhara* as referring to the two *pātimokkhas* or the bare lists of rules for fully ordained monks and nuns extracted from their Vinaya context in the *Suttavibhaṅga*.[35] The word *mātikā* is certainly used in this sense by the commentarial tradition and apparently from a relatively early date.[36] However, such an interpretation appears too specific and even anachronistic, and is not supported by the evidence found elsewhere in the texts. The feeling that in the present context the sequence *dhamma vinaya mātikā* ought to correspond to the sequence *sutta vinaya abhidhamma* is backed up by certain accounts of the first Buddhist council surviving in Chinese and Tibetan translation, which relate that after Ānanda had recited the Sūtrānta and Upāli the Vinaya, Mahākāśyapa recited the *mātrkās.*[37] Accordingly it has been suggested that *mātikā* must be the early name for the Abhidhamma.[38] Although in what follows I certainly do not wish to deny that a relationship exists between the *mātikās* and the development of the Abhidhamma, it seems to me that to suggest any simple equivalence of the two terms must be regarded as a misleading simplification.

The *mātrkās* Mahākāśyapa is said to have recited comprise the seven sets beginning with the four applications of mindfulness, along with a number of other lists of items. This is one of the reasons that led A. K. Warder to see in this list the basis of the "original" or primary *mātikā* of the Abhidhamma.[39] However, before undertaking a search for the original Abhidhamma *mātikā*, it is worth considering further the actual use of the term in the Pāli sources. Apart from its use in the compound *mātikā-dhara* (where we simply do not know precisely what *mātikā* refers to), the most extensive use of the term *mātikā* in the canonical texts is in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Its use here is quite specific and probably constitutes the earliest evidence for the technical

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In the first place *mātikā* is used to describe the list of twenty-two "triplets" (*tika*) and one hundred "couplets" (*duka*) set out at the beginning of the *Dhammasaṅgani*.[40] Each triplet comprises three categories for classifying dhammas; each couplet comprises two such categories. Essentially the *Dhammasaṅgani* is an exercise in expounding this *mātikā*, but I shall have more to say on this later. The *mātikā* of the triplets and couplets is also employed by three other canonical Abhidhamma works, namely the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, and *Paṭṭhāna*. In addition, the section of the *Dhammasaṅgani* dealing with the analysis of "form" (*rūpa*) begins with its own *mātikā*,[41] which considers form as comprising one, two, three, and so on up to eleven categories; just how this is so is then detailed by the subsequent exposition.

The lists that form the subject of the eighteen "analyses" of the *Vibhaṅga* bear the closest resemblance to Warder's "original" Abhidhamma *mātikā*, but surprisingly the term *mātikā* is not used by the *Vibhaṅga* in this connection; later tradition, however, does appear to have regarded this group of eighteen lists as constituting a *mātikā*.[42] In addition the *Vibhaṅga* does contain four explicit *mātikās*. The Abhidhamma section of "the analysis of the modes of conditioning" opens with a *mātikā* that indicates 144 variations of the dependent-arising formula that are built up systematically around sixteen basic variations (arranged in groups of four), which are each subject to a further nine variations;[43] the exposition that follows begins to apply each variation in turn to the different kinds of consciousness (*citta*) distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgani*. As a matter of necessity the text stops somewhat short of a full exposition; significantly, what exactly would constitute a full exposition is probably a question of interpretation as it is not entirely clear how many of the *Dhammasaṅgani* variables should be taken into account. In characteristic Abhidhamma fashion a pattern is indicated, but its complete unfolding is left somewhat open; like the scriptural *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* Nikāyas, the Abhidhamma texts are full of abbreviated repetitions or *peyyālas*. In "the analysis of meditation" (*jhāna*) the Suttanta section opens with a *mātikā*.[44] This is a rather untypical *mātikā*; it is made up of stock Nikāya formulas describing the attainment of the four meditations and four formless attainments. The exposition that follows consists of a straightforward word-commentary. Two further *mātikās* occur at the beginning of "the analysis of the items of knowledge" and "the analysis of minor items," respectively.[45] Both these *mātikās* consist of a schedule compiled (like the *Saṅgītisutta*, the *Dasuttarasutta*, the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, etc.) according to a principle of numerical progression from one to ten. All relevant "ones" are listed, then all relevant "twos," and so on until we reach "tens," the exposition that follows then provides a detailed explanation of all items.

The *Dhātukathā* opens with a rather more complex *mātikā* that falls into four parts: (1) 14 pairs of categories of analysis; (2) 22 sets of items to be

analyzed; (3) an indication of the path the analysis is to follow; (4) the 22 triplets and 100 couplets of the *mātikā* from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, which are also to be analyzed. The rest of the *Dhātukathā* takes the form of a relatively concise and restrained working out of this *mātikā*. The *Puggalapaññatti* opens once more with a straightforward *mātikā* that arranges the headings to be discussed in the text according to the system of numerical progression from one to ten. The *Kathāvatthu* and *Yamaka* do not have explicit *mātikās*, although once again later tradition sees fit to describe both the underlying list of discussion points in the *Kathāvatthu* and the aggregate of the ten lists that form the basis of the *Yamaka*'s ten chapters as *mātikās*.[46]

In all there are eight explicit *mātikās* in the texts of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka: two in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, four in the *Vibhaṅga*, one each at the beginning of the *Dhātukathā* and *Puggalapaññatti*.[47] The term *mātikā* is similarly employed outside the Abhidhamma Piṭaka in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, a work of the *Khuddakanikāya*, which consists of thirty "talks" (*kathā*) on various topics; the themes selected and the arrangement of the text are distinctive. The opening "talk on knowledge" starts with a *mātikā*.[48] This lists seventy-three kinds of knowledge that are then explained in the "talk" that follows. As A. K. Warder notes,[49] of the thirty talks the first is by far the longest (constituting about one-third of the whole text), and within this talk only the first of the seventy-three kinds of knowledge gets the full treatment. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* opens with a *mātikā* and closes with a "talk on a *mātikā*."[50] The *mātikā* in question consists of a series of somewhat miscellaneous terms that appear, from the subsequent exposition, to be intended to constitute fifteen divisions. Again our text is radically abbreviated; great formulas and long lists employed earlier in the work are to be inserted to work out the exposition in full.

It would appear, then, that a *mātikā* can be any schedule or table of items or lists—but especially one built up according to a system of numerical progression—that acts as a basis for further exposition. The commentarial application of the term to the bare list of Vinaya rules hardly stretches this understanding.[51]

At this point it is worth considering how the Sanskrit equivalent, *mātṛkā*, is used beyond the confines of Buddhist literature. A secondary formation derived from the ordinary word for "mother" (*mātṛ*), *mātṛkā* (cognate with English "matrix") is apparently used in the first place again simply to mean "mother," and in addition "grandmother." It is also used figuratively to mean "source" or "origin" in general. In certain kinds of medieval religious literature, such as the *Tāpaniya* Upaniṣads and the Pāñcarātra texts, the term is used to signify "diagrams written in characters (to which a mag-

ion; in the classical medical texts *mātṛkā* is a name for the eight veins on both sides of the neck.[52]

None of these meanings seems entirely appropriate for the Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit use of *mātikā/mātṛkā*.[53] Translators of Buddhist texts have often taken the word to mean something like ''summary'' or ''condensed content.'' Although one would hesitate to say that this is incorrect, it is, strictly speaking, to put things the wrong way round, for it is the underlying meaning of ''mother'' that seems to inform the use of the term here. A *mātikā* is seen not so much as a condensed summary, as the seed from which something grows. A *mātikā* is something creative—something out of which something further evolves. It is, as it were, pregnant with the Dhamma and able to generate it in all its fullness. Kassapa of Coḷa (fl. c. 1200 CE) explains the word in his *Mohavicchedanī*, a commentary on the *mātikās* of the Abhidhamma, as follows:

> In what sense is it a *mātikā*? In the sense of being like a mother. For a *mātikā* is like a mother as a face is like a lotus. For as a mother gives birth to various different sons, and then looks after them and brings them up, so a *mātikā* gives birth to various different dhammas and meanings, and then looks after them and brings them up so that they do not perish. Therefore the word *mātikā* is used. For in dependence on the *mātikā*, and by way of the seven treatises beginning with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, dhammas and meanings without end or limit are found as they are spread out, begotten, looked after and brought up, as it were, by the *mātikā*.[54]

Kassapa goes on to explain that if the seven canonical Abhidhamma treatises were expanded in full, each one would involve a recitation without end or limit (*anantāparimāṇa-bhāṇa-vāra*). He then concludes:

> Thus the word *mātikā* is used because of the begetting, looking after and bringing up of dhammas and meanings without end or limit like a mother. And looking after and bringing up here are to be understood as the bringing together and preserving of the neglected and hidden meanings of the texts, having distinguished them by following the *mātikā*.[55]

We can sum up by saying that *mātikās* contain the building blocks for constructing an exposition or text. But they are magical building blocks; when combined and used in various ways they can create a palace that is much larger in extent than the sum of the parts.

If the lists and schedules that we have been considering are *mātikās*, then someone who is *mātikā-dhara* or ''learned in the *mātikās*'' is presumably someone who knows these and similar lists. But that is not all. He also knows what to do with them; in other words, he knows how to expand them

and draw out expositions from them. One who is *mātikā-dhara* is not simply someone who can spout endless lists of lists learnt by rote, but a person who can improvise and create through the medium of these lists.

All this certainly suggests some relationship between the *mātikā* and development of the Abhidhamma, but we must, I think, be wary of understanding the earliest *mātikās* in terms of a distinct and separate body of literature existing alongside the Vinaya and Sutta Piṭakas. Rather, the Abhidhamma would appear to evolve out of an already developed practice of taking a list or combination of lists, and then expanding it to produce an exposition. This is a practice that in principle goes right back to the beginnings of Buddhist literature, gradually becoming more formalized as the body of material increased in size and certain lists acquired a special significance. Toward the end of the Nikāya period the way in which lists were being used approaches more and more closely the more formalized Abhidhamma use of *mātikās*. Appropriately enough, the substance of both the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas is presented not as coming from the mouth of the Buddha but from the mouth of Sāriputta, whose association with the Abhidhamma is very strong in the tradition;[56] and the Sarvāstivādins include the *Saṅgītiparyāya*, a text based on their recension of the *Saṅgītisutta*, among their canonical Abhidharma works.

The works of the canonical Abhidhamma, then, in part are to be seen as the result of a process of drawing up *mātikās* and exploiting them in ways already adumbrated in the sutta literature. If the kind of thing the very earliest of those learned in the *mātikās* were doing was developing suttas such as the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara*, along with treatments like the *Kumārapañha* and *Mahāpañha*, then, as I have already implied, I think we must also discern their activity in the suttas of the two great Nikāyas of the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara*. The *Aṅguttara* employs the same system of numerical arrangement, while the list of topics focused on in the *Saṃyutta* seems to adumbrate the topics that are so prominent in certain of the canonical Abhidhamma works. A comparison of the Pāli *Saṃyuttanikāya* with what we know of other *saṃyukta* recensions shows that in essence the *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* method consists of compiling and working up a body of sutta material around the following lists: (1) the five aggregates, (2) the six sense spheres, (3) the twelve links of the chain of dependent arising, (4) the four applications of mindfulness, (5) the four right endeavors, (6) the four bases of success (7) the five faculties, (8) the five powers, (9) the seven factors of awakening, (10) the noble eightfold path.[57] In fact, these ten lists appear to constitute a *consistent core element* of the *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* collections, attracting the most attention in the Pāli version and it seems in the recension surviving in Chinese translation. Further, a number of other lists seem to act as important satel-

This core list of lists continues to be of great importance in the later history of Buddhist thought and literature.[58] We find it expanded and developed as the basis of such canonical Abhidhamma/Abhidharma works as the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, and *Dharmaskandha*,[59] and also such later works as the *Arthaviniścayasūtra*. However, attempts to trace the development of this core *mātikā/mātṛkā* are not without their problems.[60] For example, in the canonical works the four truths and the four meditations find a firm place in the core, while the most consistent additions common to all versions appear to be the five precepts and the four immeasurables, neither of which feature at all in the Pāli or Chinese *saṃyutta/saṃyukta* collections.

Of course, focusing on this core *mātikā* in this way tends to the view, as expressed by A. K. Warder, that the earliest Abhidhamma/Abhidharma simply consisted in this *mātikā/mātṛkā*, and that it is the *Vibhaṅga*, in the case of the Pāli Abhidhamma, that represents the earliest and basic Abhidhamma text. According to Warder, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, with its elaborate *mātikā* of triplets and couplets represents a somewhat later refinement. However, in an important but neglected section of the introduction to his edition of the *Abhidharmadīpa*,[61] P. S. Jaini presents a considerable body of material the effect of which is to call into question the adequacy of such a view of the development of the early Abhidhamma. Jaini himself expresses certain doubts in his review of Warder's essay but does not pursue the matter.[62]

It is, however, worth reflecting on the place of the triplet-couplet *mātikā* a little further. What Jaini points out is that the triplet-couplet system of analysis is not peculiar to the Pāli Abhidhamma method, but on the contrary is also fundamental to the dharma analysis of works such as Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and the *Abhidharmadīpa* itself, except that in these works the number of triplets and couplets employed is somewhat reduced.[63]

But, in fact, as a supplement to Jaini's findings, it is worth noting that the gap between the number of triplets and couplets distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and in the northern Abhidharma sources perhaps appears greater than it really is.[64] Further, certain triplets already are found in the earlier sutta sections of the Pāli canon.[65] Thus it would seem that the kernel of the triplet/couplet *mātikā* may be very ancient, and to regard either the core *mātikā* beginning with the five aggregates or the triplet/couplet *mātikā* as more fundamental than the other is to misunderstand the basic principle that determines the way in which the Abhidhamma develops out of the use of *mātikās*. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and the *Vibhaṅga*, in the form we have them, are clearly mutually dependent. Although the core *mātikā* beginning with the five aggregates is the *Vibhaṅga*'s starting point, certainly much of the material contained in the "analysis by Abhidhamma" sections assumes and uses the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* treatment in one way or another. Furthermore, the

"question" sections simply collapse without the triplet-couplet *mātikā*. On the other hand, a point often overlooked is that, whereas the triplet-couplet *mātikā* represents the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*'s starting point, the core *mātikā* is also certainly important to its method of analysis. This is particularly in evidence in the portions of analysis concerned with "sets" (*koṭṭhāsa-vāra*) and "emptiness" (*suññata-vara*). These portions seek to bring out various groupings among the dhammas present in each moment of consciousness; the groupings brought out are for the most part derived from the core *mātikā*.[66]

In considering the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* it is not unhelpful, I think, to see the triplet-couplet *mātikā* and the core *mātikā* as acting like the two axes of the Abhidhamma method. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* treats the core *mātikā* by way of the triplet-couplet *mātikā*, and the *Vibhaṅga* treats the triplet-couplet *mātikā* by way of the core *mātikā*. The important point, however, is that the two *mātikās* are fundamental to both texts. Indeed one might suggest that the Abhidhamma method consists precisely in the interaction of the two *mātikās*, and that the Abhidhamma system is actually born of their marriage. Certainly one of the characteristics of the use of *mātikās* in the Abhidhamma is the treatment of one list of categories by the categories of another list. Thus the two lists act like the two axes of a graph table. This is precisely why Abhidhamma material is so susceptible to presentation by charts.[67]

Mātikās, Mindfulness, and Meditation

The starting point of this essay was the profusion of lists in Buddhist literature and the fact that these lists seem to have some sort of mnemonic significance. In the course of my discussion I have suggested that the lists must be seen as something more than crude mnemonic devices. They also acted as a creative medium for Buddhist literature and thought, representing a technique of oral composition as well. Yet, one might ask, what is the point of it all? When we come to these interminable Abhidhamma works with their proliferating lists, has it not all gotten out of control?

Buddhist lists are born out of *vibhaṅga*, "analysis" or, more literally, "breaking up"; that is, into the parts that constitute the whole. This is something dear to the heart of Buddhism. Our disease, suggest the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma, is that we emotionally and intellectually grasp at and fix the world of experience. From something that is essentially fluid and on the move, we try to make something that is inert, static, and solid. Ultimately, our only hope is to see through this state of affairs by undermining and breaking up this apparently solid world. Sometimes the texts suggest the world is

spheres, or the eighteen elements; sometimes in terms of wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate dhammas, or in terms of the seven "limbs" of awakening—mindfulness, discernment of Dhamma, energy, joy, tranquillity, concentration, and equipoise—or in terms of the noble eightfold path, and so on. In offering these different methods the texts seem to want to remind one that when the world is broken up into parts, these parts are not to be mistaken for inert lumps; they are moving parts and what is more they are parts that continuously change their shape and color depending on the perspective from which they are being viewed.

Of course, the danger is that when, in our attempts to undo our reifying of the world, we break it up into parts, we might then take the parts as real and begin to reify the world again, if in a different way. This is exactly the danger perceived in certain Abhidharma tendencies by the authors of the Prajñāpāramitā and later spelled out by Nāgārjuna. It seems to me that the early Abhidhamma authors sought to avoid precisely this same danger through the elaboration of the various *mātikās*. Try to *grasp* the world of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, or the *Paṭṭhāna*, and it runs through one's fingers. In short, the indefinite expansions based on the *mātikās* continually remind those using them that it is of the nature of things that no single way of breaking up and analyzing the world can ever be final.

But are not these proliferating lists yet based on, and full of, pedantic, artificial, and ultimately meaningless distinctions? Possibly. However, perhaps this is precisely the point. The Abhidhamma lists largely concern matters of practical psychology, by which I mean to say that their compilers were primarily concerned to distinguish states and processes of mind on the basis of actual observation, rather than to construct an abstract theoretical system as such. At one level the only way to begin to answer the question of why the compilers make the distinctions they do is to confront them in their own terms. Thus when the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* suggests that a single moment of ordinary wholesome consciousness involves at least fifty-six dhammas,[68] this is at once a reminder of the richness and subtlety of experience, and also a challenge to perceive and investigate that richness and subtlety for oneself. In other words, to take the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* seriously is to allow it to begin to provoke in one a state of what the texts might call *mindfulness*. It is at this point, I think, that the *mātikās* provide a clue to the relationship between "memory" and "mindfulness" as expressed in the Buddhist conception of *satismṛti*.

There is a further dimension to the way in which the *mātikās* serve the purpose of Buddhist meditation. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, like other works of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, is not really a book to be read beginning at page one, and working one's way through to the end. It is, as I have suggested, more like an abbreviated chanting manual, made up, as the text itself

indicates, of a number of "portions of recitation" (*bhāṇa-vāra*). In other words, it is not a book to be read; it is to be performed. The major part of the text is devoted to an exposition of different types of consciousness (*citta*). The full recitation pattern is given only for the first of these—just how many there are in all is not entirely clear; certainly the number runs into the thousands.[69] There are thus considerably more than the convenient summary of eighty-nine major types of consciousness counted by the later Abhidhamma.

Suppose that one has learned to recite the complete scheme for the first type of consciousness. One now sets out to chant it for the second, third, fourth types, and so on. Much is the same, but there are changes—slight from the point of view of the recitation, but significant from the point of view of the Abhidhamma as whole. One must keep awake. If one falls asleep, immediately one will not know where one is in the text: is this the second consciousness or is it the twenty-second? Memory becomes mindfulness. This may sound like a rather dry and sterile mindfulness—like a memory that evokes neither feeling nor emotion. Yet it is to be recollected that for anyone familiar with the Nikāyas, for anyone whose spiritual life has been nurtured by the Nikāyas, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is pregnant with moving and evocative associations.[70] To take but one example, "faculty of concentration" (*samādhindriya*) may sound rather uninteresting and dry, but for the ancient monk—and his modern descendant—the faculty of concentration means the four meditations, and the four meditations mean four vivid and, in the right context, beautiful, and moving similes.[71] And according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the seeds of these calm and comforting states of meditation are present in every moment of ordinary wholesome consciousness. Thus at this level, the mindful recitation of a text such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* acts a series of "reminders" of the Buddha's teaching and how it is applied in the sutta. The recitation operates as a kind of recollection of Dhamma (*dhammānusati*), a traditional subject of meditation.[72] The lengthy repetitions themselves contribute to the majesty of the performance;[73] the sheer vastness of the full recitation itself is awe inspiring. Hearing it, one is in the very presence of the Dhamma that is "profound, hard to see, hard to know, peaceful, subtle, outside the sphere of discursive thought, skillful, to be known by the wise."

Conclusion

The earliest Buddhist literature was composed orally and built up around lists. From the ever-growing body of literature, the Buddhist tradition began

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encapsulating the essence of the Dhamma; as such they were also seen as sources for the further exposition of the Dhamma. Expositions based on the *mātikās* could reveal the Dhamma in its fullness, and so, in part, the Abhidhamma—the further Dhamma, the higher Dhamma—was born. Especially characteristic of the Abhidhamma proper is the use of the triplet-couplet *mātikā* combined with the core *mātikā* that was the basis of the old *saṃyutta* collection.

The lists and subsequent *mātikās* aided memorization of the Dhamma not only by enabling one to conveniently sum up vast amounts of teaching, but also by helping one to find one's way around it; they provided a map of the Dhamma. The lists also formed a part of the practice of the Dhamma. The recitation and repetition of the lists of the Abhidhamma constituted a meditation exercise in itself that cultivated insight, wisdom, and mindfulness and inspired faith in the teaching of the Buddha. In sum, the *mātikās* seem to combine, in a distinctively Buddhist fashion, elements of memorization, mindfulness, and meditation; from the womb of the *mātikās* these emerge as one.

Notes

BHSD = F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953).

BSOAS = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London.

PED = T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: PTS, 1921–1925).

PTS = Pali Text Society, London.

Abbreviations of Pāli texts are those of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* by D. Andersen, H. Smith, V. Trenckner, *et al.*, Epilegomena to vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy, 1948); references to the *Visuddhimagga* are to chapter and paragraph of the edition of H. C. Warren and D. Kosambi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), all other references are to PTS editions.

1. S. Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 109; L. S. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature" in *Buddhist Studies: Ancient and Modern*, ed. P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky (London: Curzon Press, 1983), pp. 1–11 (pp. 3–4).

2. See, for example, E. Frauwallner, *History of Indian Philosophy* trans. V. M. Bedekar, 2 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), vol. 1. pp. 20–23.

3. D III 277. For the various ways in which the truths are cited in the Nikāyas and the translation problems they pose, see K. R. Norman, "The Four Noble Truths:

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A Problem of Pali Syntax" in *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday,* ed. L. A. Hercus et al. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), pp. 377–91.

4. S V 421–22.

5. D III 216: *tisso taṇhā. kāma-taṇhā bhava-taṇhā vibhava-taṇhā.*

6. For references and for a fuller discussion of points relating to the five aggregates, see R. Gethin, "The Five Khandhas: Their Treatment in the Nikāyas and Early Abhidhamma," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 14 (1986): 35–53.

7. M I 185.

8. M I 302.

9. S III 60.

10. M I 301.

11. S III 61.

12. S III 59–60.

13. See in particular the *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* (S IV 1–204).

14. S V 426.

15. D II 311; M III 251; S V 8–10.

16. D III 215: *tayo kusalā saṃkappā. nekkhamma-saṃkappo avyāpāda-saṃkappo avihiṃsā-saṃkappo.*

17. See in particular the *Sammappadhānasaṃyutta* (S V 244–48).

18. Classically in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* (D II 290–315) and the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* (M I 55–63).

19. The fourfold practice consists of (1) breathing in and out with a long breath, (2) breathing in and out with a short breath, (3) breathing in and out experiencing the whole body, and (4) breathing in and out tranquilizing the forces of the body. From the point of view of the expanded Nikāya treatment (M III 83–85; S V 329–31, 336–37) this is only the first of what the *Majjhima* commentary calls four "tetrads" (*catukka*); the treatment relates the four tetrads to the four applications of mindfulness.

20. S V 78: *cattāro iriyā-pathā.*

21. This list is later expanded to thirty-two parts by the addition of the brain; see Vibh-a 223–48.

22. See, for example, Dhs 55, Vism VI.

23. This account occurs in full (though lost in the abbreviations of the texts) ten times in the first *vagga* of the *Dīghanikāya* (D I 62–84, 100, 124, 147, 157–58, 159–60, 171–74, 206–9, 214–15, 232–33); the accounts in the *Poṭṭhapāda* and *Tevijja sut-*

tas diverge after the description of the fourth meditation (*jhāna*). There is also a briefer *Majjhima* version of this stage-by-stage account of the path (M I 178–84, 267–71, 344–48, III 33–36, 134–37).

24. See D III 279, 275 where the *Dasuttarasutta* calls the six *abhiññās* and three *vijjās* six and three dhammas "to be realized" (*sacchikātabba*); see also PED, s.vv. *abhiññā, vijjā*.

25. See D III 216, which gives the three *āsavas;* there are also lists of four and five *āsavas,* cf. PED, s.v. *āsava.*

26. A I 295–97. The "middle way" here is between "indulgence" (*āgāḷha*) and "burning away" (*nijjhāma*); the terminology here thus differs from that found in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta,* where the two extremes are *kāmesu kāma-sukhallikānuyogo* and *atta-kilamathānuyoga,* but it is clear from the explanations that the two extremes in both cases correspond.

27. See, for example, Vism XXII 33–43, and also R. M. L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhipakkhiyā Dhammā* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

28. Cf. the *Kāyagatāsatisutta* (M III 88–99).

29. See Th 1255; Thī 43, 69, 103; Ap 563; Nidd I 45.

30. Khp 2; A V 48–54, 54–59.

31. See J. W. de Jong "The Daśottarasūtra," *Kanakura Hakushi Koki Kinen: Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Ronshū* (Kyōto, 1966), pp. 3–25; reprinted in J. W. de Jong, *Buddhist Studies,* ed. G. Schopen (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), pp. 251–73.

32. For other uses of the term, see note 53.

33. D II 125; M I 221–23; A I 117, II 147, 169, 170, III 179–80, 361–62, V 15–16, 349, 352: *bahu-ssuto āgatāgamo dhamma-dharo vinaya-dharo mātikā-dharo.* The Vinaya version of this stock phrase (Vin I 119, 127, 337, 339, II 8, 98, 229) adds the words "mature, skilled, intelligent, conscientious, concerned, devoted to the training" (*paṇḍito vyatto medhavī lajjī kukkuccako sikkhā-kāmo*).

34. See BHSD, s.v. *mātṛkā.*

35. Mp II 189, III 382.

36. See K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature, A History of Indian Literature,* ed. J. Gonda, vol. 7, Fasc. 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), pp. 96, 126; the *parivāra* also appears to use the term in this sense (Vin V 86).

37. I refer to the accounts found in the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya (Tibetan and Chinese) and some versions of the *Aśoka-adāna.* See W. W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order Derived from Tibetan Works in the bK-h-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1907), p. 6c; J.

Przyulski, *Le concile de Rājagṛha* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1926), p. 45; cf. J. Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma," BSOAS 48 (1985): 305–20 (p. 320).

38. See PED, s.v. *mātikā*, BHSD, s.v. *mātṛkā*; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1958), p. 164; Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 96.

39. "The Mātikā" in *Mohavicchedanī*, ed. A. P. Buddhadatta (London: PTS, 1961), pp. ix–xxvii (p. xx).

40. Dhs 1–7. This is the *abhidhamma-mātikā;* there is appended a *suttanta-mātikā* consisting of a further forty-two couplets (Dhs 7–8).

41. Dhs 124–33. This is repeated in the *Vibhaṅga* (pp. 12–14) where, however, it is not called *mātikā;* perhaps, this is because here it is regarded as complete in its own right and does not form the basis for a subsequent exposition.

42. As K. R. Norman points out (*Pāli Literature*, p. 100), *Mohavicchedanī* (pp. 116–2, 30) takes the titles of each *vibhaṅga* as forming a *mātikā*.

43. Vibh 138–43.

44. Vibh 244–45.

45. Vibh 306–18, 345–49.

46. See As 4; Kv-a 7; Moh 3, 257, 278; cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, pp. 96, 105.

47. Norman's reference (*Pāli Literature*, p. 106) to a *mātikā* at the beginning of the *Paṭṭhāna* appears mistaken.

48. Paṭis I 1–3.

49. *The Path of Discrimination*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (London: PTS, 1982), pp. xviii–ix.

50. Paṭis II 243–46.

51. Cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 96.

52. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1899), s.v. *mātṛkā*.

53. The term, however, is used in two contexts in the Vinaya Piṭaka in the ordinary figurative sense of "source" or "origin" (a sense not noted in PED, s.v. *mātikā*): there are "eight grounds for the withholding of kaṭhina [privileges]" (*aṭṭha mātikā kaṭhinassa ubbhārāya*) and "eight sources for the production of a robe" (*aṭṭha mātikā cīvarassa uppādāya*); see Vin I 255, 309, III 196, 199, V 136, 172–74. Cf. *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinayavastu*, Gilgit Manuscripts, ed. N. Dutt, vol. 3, Part 2 (Srinagar, 1942), p. 161: *aṣṭau mātṛkā-padāni kaṭhinoddhārāya saṃvartante* (Edgerton mistakenly translates as "eight summary points," see BHSD, s.v. *mātṛkā*). The word

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is also used (only once in the Nikāyas?) to mean "water-course" or "channel" (e.g., A IV 237, As 269).

54. Moh 2: *kenatthena mātikā. mātu-samatthena. mātā viyā ti hi mātikā yathā padumikaṃ mudhan ti. yathā hi mātā nānā-vidhe putte pasavati te pāleti poseti ca evaṃ ayaṃ pi nānā-vidhe dhamme atthe ca pasavati te ca avinassamāne pāleti poseti ca. tasmā mātikā ti vuccati. mātikaṃ hi nissāya dhammasaṅgaṇi-ādisatta-ppakaraṇa-vasena vitthāriyamānā anantāparimāṇā dhammā atthā ca tāya pasūtā viya pālitā viya positā viya ca labbhanti.*

55. Moh 3: *evam anantāparimāṇānaṃ dhammānaṃ atthānaṃ ca pasavanato pālanato posanato ca mātā viyā ti mātikā ti vuccati. pālana-posanañ cettha pamuṭṭhānaṃ viraddhānañ ca pāḷi-atthānaṃ mātikānusārena sallakkhetvā samānayanato rakkhanato ca veditabbaṃ.*

56. See, for example, As 1, 16–17.

57. Cf. M. Anesaki, "The Four Buddhist Āgamas in Chinese: A Concordance of their Parts and the Corresponding Counterparts in the Pali Nikāyas," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 35 (1908): 1–149 (pp. 68–126); Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma," pp. 316–17.

58. Cf. Warder, "The Mātikā," p. xx.

59. For the *Dharmaskandha*, see J. Takakusu, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1905): 111–15.

60. For example, Warder, "The Mātikā;" Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma."

61. *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, ed. P. S. Jaini, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 4 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), pp. 22–49 (pp. 40–45).

62. BSOAS 26 (1963): 438–39.

63. The *Kośa* and the *Dīpa* both use five triplets and fifteen couplets, while the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* uses six triplets and twenty-two couplets; most of these triplets and couplets have their counterparts in the *mātikā* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, but not all of them.

64. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* gains four of its triplets by simply taking four existing triplets and introducing a secondary principle (i.e., the notion of "object" (*ārammaṇa*) of consciousness; thus triplets 9, 13, 19, 21 are variations on 8, 12, 18, 20, respectively). With the couplets the number is brought up to 100 by applying what are more or less the same six principles to ten different lists of unwholesome categories. Of course, since the lists are different, when the resulting couplets are applied, say, in the *Vibhaṅga*'s "question" sections, this can result in significant differences in the answers. Nevertheless there is considerable overlap here, and in the case of the "knots" (*gantha*), "floods" (*ogha*), and "bonds" (*yoga*) there is simple repetition

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(see Dhs. 24). One suspects that the purpose in part was simply to reach the number 100. Finally one should also perhaps bear in mind that the northern sources in question are later summary Abhidharma manuals that may have pared down the number of triplets and couplets to essentials; the triplets and couplets are not treated fully in the *Visuddhimagga*, a comparable Pāli summary work.

65.   Seven are found in the *Saṅgīti* and *Dasuttara* suttas: triplet 2 (D III 216 19–20, 275 1–3); triplet 6 (D III 217 1–2, 274 25–28); triplet 11 (D III 218 1–2, 219 3–4); triplet 14 (D III 215 23–24); triplet 15 (D III 217 1–2); triplet 18 (D III 216 16–17); triplet 22 (D III 217 22–34). The "within/without/within-without" triplet has an important place in the (*Mahā*) *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*; in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* we have what appears to be the "small/become great/immeasurable" triplet (A V 63). Thus a total of nine triplets have explicit Nikāya antecedents. Curiously, the triplet that appears to be most basic in both the southern and northern systems, the "wholesome/unwholesome/indeterminate" triplet, is apparently absent from the Nikāyas, but it is found in the Vinaya, though not in the oldest portions (Vin II 91–92).

66.   The *koṭṭhāsa-vāra* for the first type of wholesome consciousness belonging to the sphere of the senses states that on the occasions of its occurrence "there are four aggregates, two sense-spheres, two elements, three foods, eight faculties, a five-factored meditation (*jhāna*), a fivefold path, seven powers, three motivations" (Dhs 17). In the treatment of transcendent consciousness the awakening-factors are also brought out (Dhs 60–75, 99–117).

67.   Cf. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 107.

68.   Dhs 9.

69.   This suggests that the complete text could never have been recited in full without any abbreviations (*peyyāla*); possibly sections were singled out for full recitation on occasion.

70.   Cf. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature," pp. 8–9

71.   See, for example, D I 74–76 where the four meditations (*jhānas*) are characterized by the similes of the ball of moist soap powder, the pool fed by a spring, the pool of lotuses, and the man wrapped in a clean white robe.

72.   See Vism 68–88.

73.   Cf. R. J. Corless, "The Garland of Love: A History of Religions Hermeneutic of Nembutsu Theory and Practice" in *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honor of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap*, ed. A. K. Narain (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1979), pp. 53–73 (pp. 63–64).

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Psychological Aspects of Theravāda Buddhist Meditation Training: Cultivating an I-less Self

Peter Harvey

Introduction: The Buddhist approach to life

If 'psychology' is taken as the systematic attempt to understand the working of the human mind, and to develop ways to methodically improve its workings when they go awry, then Buddhism can claim to be one of, if not the, most ancient psychological systems in the world. This claim can particularly be made for the *Abhidhamma* literature, detailing the make up and interactions of mental states, which developed from perhaps the third century BC (see Nyānaponika 1965).

Buddhism's approach was, from the beginning, therapeutic in nature. Thus the central teachings known as the Four Noble Truth were structured in a way which parallelled medical practice of the Buddha's day: i) identify a disease, ii) specify its cause, iii) say whether the disease is curable, iv) outline the method of cure. Thus the Buddha taught; i) *dukkha*- suffering and unsatisfactoriness- is a pervasive feature of life; ii) but it has identifiable causes, such as demanding desires, based on a misperception of the nature of reality; iii) and it can be overcome -in the experience of Nirvāna-, by finally destroying these causes; iv) and this can be accomplished by the Noble Eightfold Path: the 'middle way' which systematically develops moral virtue (right speech, action and livelihood), meditative clamming (right effort, mindfulness and concentration) and insight based on this (right understanding and thought; Harvey, 1990: 47-72). The three aspect of the path work, respectively, on three aspects of one's character:

   i) moral virtue works on bodily and verbal conduct, so as to act in a more morally wholesome, virtuous way: avoiding intentional harm to any being, and practising generosity.
   ii) meditative calming acts on the way one's *citta* -mind or heart-works.
   iii) insight works on one's understanding of the nature of reality.

Virtue is seen as a good foundation of the other two, though it is also strengthened and deepened by them. This is because unwholesome actions counteracted by virtue-strengthen the hindrances to meditative success. Meditation helps weaken these, and so aids virtuous behaviour.

In its analysis of the normal human condition, Buddhism is not afraid to emphasis unsatisfactory features of life, be they physical pain, disappointment, worry, frustration, or simply the sense of the fragility of life. The point of doing so, however, is to first understand that there is a problem situation, so that one can go on to do something about it. This is because it holds that a key cause of a continuation of *dukkha* is to keep on ignoring its presence in one's life. While some forms of it may be obvious, but might be dismissed as rare occurrences, others are more subtle and all-pervasive, especially our liability, as sentient beings, to be frustrated, by the contingent, shifting nature of the world and our own psycho-physical makeup.

Of course, Buddhism does not deny the existence of happiness, but it points out that is impermanent, and cannot be reliably held onto; indeed, to try to do so is a good recipe for the *dukkha* of feeling let down. That said, Buddhism has much to say, not only on understanding our existing state as one of *dukkha*, but on cultivating states which include deep states of happiness and joy (but it reminds one not to be attached even to these).

Overcoming passivity and engaging with the process of self- transformation

Another feature of Buddhism's outlook on the human situation, is that our various forms of suffering do not simply have to be passively accepted as something one can do nothing about. While patience with existing troubles is advised, the path is seen to progressively liberate one from suffering, and to ultimately uproot the very psychological foundations of any kind of suffering (other than physical pain, which even a liberated person is subject to while still embodied). In this sense, Buddhism has a very optimistic view of the possibilities of human transformation. This is because it sees itself as having a systematic and powerful -though not easy-system for selftransformation. Moreover, it also holds that the potential for a such transformation lies already dormant in the depths of the mind: 'This mind is brightly shining, but it is defiled by defilements which arrive' (*Aṅguttara Nikāya* I.10). That is, the depth

levels of the operation of the mind are pure, radiant, unencumbered, and containing the seeds of such positive qualities as loving kindness and compassion.

These "depths"are obscured, though by "defilements" -such as greed, hatred and delusion- which arise from the world of sense-objects, primarily through misconstruing their nature, and so grasping at them, or angrily rejecting then (Harvey,1989:93-99).so,Buddhism holds that we are -all of us-somewhat in a mess, but we can do something about this by understanding and nature of the mess, its causes, come to increasingly understand and improve the way our mind works, so as to take charge of our own destiny, "be more our own person",rather than being the puppet of external influences and our own passing emotions or limiting habits.

To initiate and sustain the process of growth, a person needs a basis of:

a)   appropriate outlook and motive: to believe that it is possible and worthwhile to change oneself, and that one can do it oneself, through a process of gradual application and development.

b)   appropriate conduct:acting in the light of an awareness of the effect of one's actions and speech on other people and on one's own mental state.

One needs to develop a momentum in good states of mind and in undermining bad states of mind, eg. irritation,fear, jealousy etc. Given that such states may often arise, due to the usual way the mind works, it can be seen that meditation practice is "against the stream" of the normal habits and tendencies of the mind. Nevertheless, it can draw on deep resources on the mind that are not often used.

One needs to put energy and effort into the process of refining the mind and its reactions. The effort should be neither too slack nor too tense, just as a guitar string should not be. As in gardening, one must put in the right conditions, then learn to let natural processes develop as a intent of this. One also needs to spur on progress in the practice, and phases of a more contented settling into the point one has reached.

Barriers to growth

In seeking to calm and purify the mind -and in ordinary living-the meditator finds that there are many negative, limiting, ego-centred emotions; these all help to keep the mind/heart "small". In their different ways, these negative traits are all expressions of the mind's constantly shifting, restless nature. It can be observed to constantly hum and roar, and is hardly ever silent, still. It is hungry, and is always on the lookout for 'food' to chew on, be this in the form of experiences, or things to do or think about. If one soon notices this feature of the mind! verses from the *Dhammapada* well express the mind's fluid and subtle nature:

The flickering, fickle mind, difficult to guard, difficult to control, the wise man straightens it as a fletcher an arrow.

Like a fish drawn from its watery abode and thrown upon land, even so does the this mind flutter...

The mind is hard to check, swift, flits wherever it wishes,- the control of which is good; a controlled mind is conducive to happiness (vv.33-5).

Whatever harm a foe may do to a foe, or a hater to a hater, an ill directed mind can do one still greater harm (v.42).

Buddhism frequently enumerates negative traits in the mind -or' defilements'- in terms of the 'five hindrances' (Nayanaponika 1970; Rowlands, 1982: 57-9). These are seen to obscure and hinder the mind's potential for developing sustained, well-focused application to any task, including meditation. By recognising them and learning to undermine them, meditation can allow the calm, stillness and brightness in the depths of the mind to 'shine through'. The five hindrances are:

i) *Desire for pleasurable sense-experiences*

The mind reaching out for more alluring and 'interesting' objects than the task at hand.

-This is compared to being in debt, for one feels to 'owe' the desired objects attention, and so is pulled towards them; they have a hold on one.

ii) *Ill-will*

The mind reacting against the task at hand, or irritation with people distracting one, or with oneself for having difficulties with the task.

-This is compared to having an illness which makes everything taste bitter: to an irritated mind, the world is an irritating place!

iii) *Dullness and drowsiness*

Mental and physical laziness, inertia.

-This is compared to being in jail: one is incarcerated in one's passive state: not engaging with any worthwhile activity, one gets nothing out of life.

iv) *Restlessness and worry*

The mind fluctuating between phases of over - energised excitement, with a flurry of thoughts, and a 'low' state of unease, worry or guilt.

-This is compared to being a slave: being very dependent on what frame of mind one happens to be in, wavering between emotional highs and lows.

v) *Vacillation or fear of commitment*

The mind wavering back and forth, 'sitting on the fence',dithering: that is, holding back from putting one's energy into a task because, though it is starting to progress well, one raises specious doubts about it.

-This is compared to turning back half way through a journey: just when one is starting to get somewhere.

Everyone experiences these hindrances, to varying degrees,both in our ordinary life, and when meditation is practised.Meditators are counselled to recognize them and so get to know them, but not to feel 'guilty' when they occur. Actively generated guilt[1] is itself an aspect of the fourth hindrance it agitates the mind-, and may also verge into ill-will towards oneself!

Overcoming and development through meditation

Overall, Buddhist practice can be seen as a combination of two processes:

a)   the cultivation and growth of wholesome, positive mental states, and

b)   the weakening, and final eradication, of mental, 'defilements'.

These twin processes are enacted through the development of meditation, which in the Theravāda tradition is of two main sorts.The first is *Samatha*, or calm meditation, and the second is *Vipassanā*, or Insight meditation (Harvey, 1990: 244-57; Goleman,

1978 1-39).For the process of meditation to be learnt and develop well, a teacher is needed: someone with more experience who can draw on this to guide the meditator in the correct use of the potent means of self-change that meditation offers.Both Samatha and Vipassanā involve regular practice of perhaps thirty minutes a day. Both usually work with the body in a still , stable posture,to facilitate mental stilling and awareness. Both make much use of "mindfulness" (sati) : disinterested,patient , heedful attention to an object or objects, so as to see things as -they-are, from moment to moment. Both,in their own way, are ways of training the attention, so that the mind's processes follow attention down more skilful, wholesome avenues of developments.

samatha meditation

Samatha works by having mindfulness focused on one object, such as certain aspect of the breathing process, or the feeling of loving kindness. There is developed a steady, sustained attention to the chosen object so that the mind gradually begins to settle down and become more unified, peaceful and tranquil. Nevertheless, in doing this, the mind's restless energy and its tendency to wander towards diverse thoughts needs to be gently disciplined and restrained. Thus samatha involves both the cultivation of positive states, and the weakening and then suspension (but not yet permanent eradication) of the hindrances.

The key positive states which samatha cultivates are known as the 'five factors of jhāna' or the 'five intensifying factors' (Rowlands, 1982: 56-62; Nyanaponika, 1965, 56-61).These help to draw out and intensify the mind's potential, culminating in the attainment of jhāna, the full state of mental clarity and unification: meditation in the fullest sense . These factors are:

     i) *Vitakka* , or 'Applied thought'; applying, and re-applying the mind to the meditation object.

     ii) Vicāra, 'Examination' or 'Sustained thought'; a sustained examination and exploration of the meditation object ; keeping the mind on the object.

     iii) Pīti: or 'Joy': physical and mental zest and energisation, felt, at first, as mild joyful tingles, later in a more sustained and intense way.

itself in a more tranquil and calm way than joy , as a deeply contented inner happiness.

v) *Citta-ekaggata* ,or 'one-pointedness of mind' : unification of the mind and its energies, through being wholly focused on the meditation object.

The above is more or less the order in which these factors gradually develop. They are each seen as particular counteractives to one of the five hindrances.

-Applied Thought counteracts dullness and drowsiness: by engaging the mind in activity.

-Examination counteracts vacillation; by sustained application to the task at hand.

-Joy counteracts ill-will : by being a warm , uplifting enagisation, rather than a fiery one.

-Happiness counteracts restlessness and worry :by being a calm contented feeling which avoids the extremes of elation and depression.

-One-pointedness of mind counteracts desire for pleasurable sense expeerieces: by letting the mind remain ,in stillness, on one object,, without wanting to shuffle off in search of others.

Thus the cultivation of the *jhāna* factors , if done in a regular, sustained way , can gradually counteract the hindrances. If the meditation has insufficient momentum, though, the hindrances can prevent the growth of the *jhāna* factors. Even when the grow in strength, though, the meditator has to be on guard for subtle re-expressions of the hindrances. Each *jhāna*-factor needs to be helped by the next, or it may partly stimulate a hindrance:

-Resistance to applied thought may led to vacillation arising .

-Resistance to examination may led to ill-will arising.

-Too much enagisation arising from Joy may lead to restlessness and worry.

-Attachment to happiness may lead to desire for pleasurable sense-experiences.

-One -pointedness without sufficient energy and mindfulness can allow dullness and drowsiness to arise.

Once the hindrances are fully suspended' and the *jhāna*-factors fully developed-which takes persistent, subtle work on the mind-the first *jhāna* will be experienced, as a state in which the mind is wholly taken up with chosen object in a state of intense but focused mindfulness, accompanied by great joy and happiness. As such an altered state involves insensitivity to any object other than the meditation object, it is technically a trance statebut it is a lucid trance, in which there is great awareness, and which can also be remembered after leaving it.

The development of loving kindness

Besides mindfulness of breathing, the cultivation of loving kindness (*metta*) is a common form of Samatha practice (Ñāṇamoli, 1975: 321-53). It is particularly useful at dealing with the second hindrance-ill-will-and related defilements. It is a common human experience that our relationships with other people, with animals, with our own thoughts are often marred by resentment etc.. From inner tensions come tensions with those around us; and we also store up the charge of outer tensions as inner tensions. Loving kindness warms up and opens out the heart, in aspiration for the happiness of all beings, starting with oneself, thus working directly on such inner tensions. Any degree of loving kindness practice is very beneficial, for the seeds of this quality are already latent in the 'brightly shining mind' which is the unconscious resting-state of the mind.

One who has deeply developed Loving kindness may think, 'formerly this mind of mine was limited, but now my mind is immeasurable, welldeveloped' (Aṅguttara *Nikāya* v.299). Accordingly, Loving kindness is seen as one of the four 'immeasurables': when fully developed, they break down the mental barriers we usually hide-and imprison-ourselves behind, so as to make the mind/heart 'immeasurable'. These uplifting and purifying attitudes or emotions are:

Loving kindness: which counteracts ill-will and aversion Compassion: which counteracts tendencies to cruelty sympathetic joy: which counteracts envy and jealousy equanimity: which counteracts attachment and partiality.

The most commonly practised, in Theravāda Buddhism, is the first.

What is 'Loving kindness', though? It is:

-The heartfelt aspiration for the happiness and health of a living being, whether oneself or any other: for all wish to be happy.

-A genuine liking of self and others.

-A feeling akin to the love of a mother for her young child, but without its tendency to over-attachment, and radiated to a range of people.

-Rejoicing at the goodness of people.

-A warm, accepting patience, free from all hatred, ill-will, bitterness, festering self-pity, resentment or stoic indifference.

-A willingness to patiently work with what life and other people present us with, without anger.

-A warm glow of zestful energy in the 'heart', which melts some of the icy-encrustations from our ego.

While it can be expressed at any time as a mental attitude and in kind words and deeds, it can also be deliberately cultivated as a meditation.

An important principle, here, is that one starts by focusing loving kindness on oneself. This has beneficial effects on one's relationship with and attitude towards oneself, and also clears the way for improving one's relationship with and attitude to others. on the first matter, learning to have genuine Loving kindness to oneself helps overcome self-dislike. This may manifest itself in tension, agitation, stiffness, self-blame, being too hard on oneself, self-punishment, and heavy guilt feelings. Guilt makes a big deal of 'me' and 'my faults'. It is an agitated state which does not help clarify the mind and genuinely improve behaviour. Better to simply regret what one has done -if it is genuinely unwholesome- and resolve to do better in future: based on one's sense of moral integrity and an awareness of the consequences of unwholesome actions. certainly we all have faults and limitations, and a complacent attitude to them is of no use. they should be acknowledge and lived with until they have been gently undermined. Buddhism does not hold that faults are best undermined by repressing them, or doing battle with them as hateful enemies; to do so is simply to strengthen aversion and ill-will. It is like trying to untangle a ball of string by pulling at it; it only makes matters worse. A good attitude to have is that of forgiving oneself-

as that helps one to be able to forgive others. It also helps to have a sense of humour about one's character and traits- this stops one taking oneself too seriously; it lightens and loosens up the mind, which itself facilitates change; like loosening up a knot before undoing it. Loving kindness gives space and fluidity, so that one's faults can start to changesimply as a natural result of meditation practice.

Nevertheless, a very quiet person may benefit, at first, from learning to express anger, rather than repressing it,or ignoring it, so that it festers. However, the best way of relating to anger etc. is to be aware of it , without either repressing or expressing it; to let it 'melt' in the light of awareness, with some help from Loving kindness. Loving kindness aids in the process of becoming aware of oneself- particularly one's darker side. If one thinks of one's faults as like small mischievous animals that live in the dark, the kindly, warm, unthreatening light of Loving kindness can coat them out into the open. They can then be gently tamed and their energy diverted into more wholesome directions.

Loving kindness towards oneself helps develop a warm feeling of friendliness and positive aspiration towards oneself, giving oneself 'permission' to open up to the benefits that meditation brings. With this as a basis, one can then open up to others more; first 'I'm OK , then 'You're OK' . In order to be able to genuinely like others, one must first get on good terms with oneself, experiencing what it is like to feel Loving kindness- for the person it should be the easiest for us to like. If one can accept oneself and with oneself well, with all one's (real and imaginary) faults- liking oneself 'warts and all'- ,then one can do this as regards others, too. Often, we most dislike in others what we dislike in others what we dislike in ourselves,so this is another good reason start with oneself.

Among the results of cultivating Loving kindness, it is said that ;
-one sleeps well, without bad dreams,
-people regard one in a kindly light,
-one is protected from attacks, whether from people or animals,
-the mind becomes more easily concentrated.

A method of development

It is best to practice Loving kindness meditation after first calming the mind through a practice such as mindfulness of breathing,in provided that has gone well, and the mind is calm and fresh. The attention is focused on the middle of the chest, in the heart region,and the meditator says something like the following while trying to really mean it:

May I be well and happy; may I be free from difficulties or troublesmental, physical, or from my surroundings; may I be in harmony with those around me; may my heart be calm, wholesome and strong; may I be truly well and happy!

The meditator then visualises him /herself involved in some action which expresses a side of their character that he/she does not particularly like. Loving kindness is sent to that 'self', recollecting the silly things that 'I' sometimes do. There is then a return to positive aspirations, this time coordinating the reflection with the breathing:

In breath: may I be calm. Out breath: and free from agitation.
In breath: may I be mindful.Out breath: and free from heedlessness.
In breath: may I be energy. Out breath: and be free of laziness.
In breath: may I be kind.Out breath:and free from coldness.

The meditator then moves on to direct Loving kindness to others, in the following order:

      i)   a respected person

      ii)   a friend

      iii)   a neutral person -someone the meditator sees occasionally,

but   has not spoken to, and for whom he/she has no feelings for or against.

      iv)   a hostile person- someone disliked by the meditator,or whom they find irritating, or see as hostile to them.

The point of working through this sequence is that, having begun with the easiest person to like -oneself-one progressively moves towards the most difficult person. In some ways, this has parallels to the process of systematic desensitisation, for overcoming phobias: one learns to deal with a small reminder of the fear-stimulus until one can deal with a full blown version of it.In the case of Loving kindness

practice, one is systematically desensitising one self to stimuli for ill-will; or systematically sensitising oneself to positive regard for a range of people. By this method, regular practice modifies one's mental behaviour, and the attitudes underlying it this could be seen as akin to Behaviouristic behaviour modification, but done 'from the inside', so to speak[2].

For each of the types of people, a particular person-whose face can be visualised- is chosen as a representative example. Someone of the opposite sex should not be chosen,otherwise Loving kindness might verge towards sexual feelings (in other contexts, though, Loving kindness can be expressed to both sexes). Starting with the respected person, the meditator repeats what they had directed towards themselves (with suitable changes: may you be well and happy ..), apart from the dwelling on negative features. The person's face is visualised when doing so, and they may be seen as smiling. For the meditation to be beneficial, there is no point going on to the 'next' person until some positive feeling has been felt for the one before-otherwise the process strained and artificial.

Reflections to help undermine ill-will and aversion

In a situation of hostility, two people are likely to wish each other harm and discomfort. But if one bears resentment to another, or reacts with anger to their acts, one is oneself bringing immediate harm to oneself by the mental and physical tension, disquiet and pain of these emotions. They tighten up the stomach, agitate the heart and disperse any calm that is there, throwing one off balance. Accordingly, a meditation teacher might give the following type of guidance on how to undermine feelings of ill-will to others:

Think of an angry reaction in the following ways:

- it is like picking up a stick to hit someone with, but finding it is alight and smeared with cow dung, so one burns oneself (with anger) and gets a bad smell (inner tension, which one radiates to one's environment).

- it is like throwing dust at someone, when the wind is blowing towards one: some might fall on them, but one certainly gets covered oneself!

While another person can directly injure your body, they can only injure your mind indirectly. They provide a stimulus that you may choose to respond to. That is, for someone to 'make' you angry, you have to cooperate with them to some degree. It is possible, though, to learn to take more responsibility for one's emotions, and learn not to respond with anger, but retain one's centre of balance (but try to avoid doing so in a smug way: 'you can't wind me up- so there!').

The Buddha taught that anger could be conquered and dissolved by loving kindness: a mind with strong loving kindness cannot be raised to anger any more than one can set fire to a river! Once, he was not at home as she was listening to the Buddha remained calm, the man asked why he did not respond in kind. The Buddha replied that, while the man had brought him a generous 'gift' (anger)' he had everything he wanted, so the 'gift' should return to the donor!

In reflecting on a 'hostile' person, one can reflect that, if they did something against you, say, last week, they are a somewhat different person now, in a different frame of mind' for the mind and moods change all the time. Thus, in a certain sense, the person you dislike no longer exists.

On the other hand, one might draw on the idea of past rebirths (seen as countless), and reflect that everyone one comes across has, in some past life, been a close relative or friend and been very good to one: so remember this and return kindness now.

One can also reflect that every person and being you will ever come across is like you in wanting to be happy and free from suffering. In this respect, we are all the same. So bear this in mind, and wish a 'hostile' person what you wish yourself.

In reflecting on those who irritate you, focus on their good side, not their bad side. If you cannot find any good side, then have compassion for them: they must be really screwed up, and will suffer accordingly.

Developing Loving kindness does not mean becoming a door-mat and letting people

walk over one: to let them do so is not actually good for them! One can resist unjust things with determination and firmness - but anger and indignation just hype up the whole situation, and do not help.

Vipassanā meditation

Vipassanā works by opening out mindfulness, to objectively note, and let go of, whatever the mind or senses notice (Nyanaponika 1969). The field of attention is the 'four foundation of mindfulness':

      i) the body' in terms of passing sensation, itches, small movements- and eg. the sounds noticed through the senses.

      ii) feelings- the constantly changing flow of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings.

      iii) mind-states: emotions, frames of mind, attitudes....

      iv) patterns of events: such as the five hindrances, or the five *jhāna* factors- noticing these, and understanding them.

In all of this, the aim is to calmly observe how these phenomena constantly arise and cease, particularly noticing: i) their changeable quality; ii) their obvious, or subtle unsatisfactoriness/ limitation, and iii) their nature as impersonal, conditioned processes, that is, their being not self. While Vipassanā develops certain positive traits, its emphases is on undermining the ingrained misperception of the nature of things which feeds grasping, and thus suffering.

Vipassanā is often practised once the mind has first been clarified and strengthened by Samatha. Samatha particularly enhances the power and inner stability of the mind, which enable it to 'digest', with benefit, insights into such potentially disturbing themes as not-self. It is also possible to start with Vipassanā and then add on samatha. Either way, both are, in the end, necessary for bringing about deep and lasting transformation of a human being to a state beyond defilements. and the suffering they bring.

Defilements are seen as existing at three levels:

      i) Those which are expressed in actions of body and speech, causing suffering to others and oneself: these are to be restrained by the practise of moral virtue-avoidance of harmful actions, and performance of

counteractive actions of generosity and kindness.

ii) Those which exist at the level of active thought and emotion in the mind: these are to be undermined by samatha practice, which disciplines and calms the mind, weakening greed and hatred, and develops wholesome states to counteract them.

iii) Those which exist at the deeper levels of the mind, as unconscious latent tendencies, the very root of all the defilements: these are to be uprooted by undermining the misperception and delusion that feed them, by samatha-based-Vipassanā, which sees things as they really are, rather than as we would like them to be, or have got into the habit of seeing them.

Re-conditioning and de-conditioning.

Both Samatha and Vipassanā draw on the principle of Conditioned Arising or Dependent Origination: that everything, mental and physical, arises according to nurturing conditions, and ceases when these cease. In Samatha, the emphasis is on re-conditioning the way the mind/heart works. It seeks to gather in energies, and integrate wholesome mental factors so as to grow a strong, kindly centre of calm and awareness, so that one can, almost literally, 'get oneself together'. In Samatha, a two-fold complementary process is nurtured:

i) being more centred, 'one's own person', more in charge of oneself, more 'together', less perturbed by external events, and our own' emotions: 'being one's own refuge';

ii) being more open-hearted and sensitive to the needs of others, particularly through developing Loving kindness, which expands the mind.

Both of these take place because Samatha allows the intrinsic radiant purity of the deepest layers of the mind to be increasingly experienced at a conscious level. By quieting the surface of the mind, the purity of the 'brightly shining' depths of the mind pervades the 'surface'.

Part of the re-conditioning of the mind that Samatha facilitates is based on an observation of a person's basic character type, and then applying appropriate meditations to counteract negative traits in this and build on its strengths[3] . The three most common character types are seen to be:

    i) the greed type: one who enjoys and savours life, being drawn to pleasant features of it, real or apparent, but blind to the presence of *dukkha* in life.

    ii) the hate type: one who is easily irritated, and always notices negative features of life, real or apparent.

    iii) the delusion type: one who is fuddle-headed and somewhat confused, with no opinion of his own.

A person's type is said to be diagnosable by such features as how they walk and move, how they wake up etc: primarily behavioural criteria. It is recommended that the greed type contemplates such things as the decaying nature of the body, and lives in unpleasant surroundings. The hate-type will particularly benefit from practice Loving kindness meditation, and should live in pleasant surrounding. The delusion type should particularly practise mindfulness of breathing, and should also live in pleasant surroundings. In time, they may evolve into one of three parallel positive types:

    i) the faith type: who is attracted to things worthy of attraction.

    ii) the intelligence type: who rightly understands *dukkha* and so lets go of things which should be let go of.

    iii) the discursive type: who can think around topics in a hopefully beneficial way.

In Vipassanā, the emphasis is on understanding oneself as simply a conditioned stream of mental and physical processes: material form, feelings (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral), cognitions, volitions and other mental responses (including emotions), and discriminating consciousness. These are carefully observed to be impermanent, unsatisfactory and not an abiding Self or I. They cannot be seen as something that can be truly 'possessed' as 'mine', or be a true identity as 'I', or an essence, as 'My self'. Indeed, when carefully examined, everything can be seen to be not-self. A person thus comes to carefully examine all that he or she fondly identifies with as 'I', and so realizes that, as it is all changing, conditioned, and subtly unsatisfactory,

it cannot be a permanent, substantial I or self. As each thing is seen in this way, this allows a letting go from it, which leads to a sense of lightness, openness and joy. This will be the more complete the more it is realized that everything is not-self; that 'self' is an empty concept. Not only an empty concept, but a harmful one: for taking something changeable as a permanent I can only lead to suffering when that thing changes. And to protect 'I' we often cause suffering to others. Thus Vipassanā comes to lead the limiting habit-conditions that are rooted in I-centred-ness, and ultimately allows an experience of that which is totally unconditioned: Nirvāna.

Growth ,and letting go of the products of growth

Meditative development entails not only the ability to let go of unwholesome states, but also of wholesome ones, while still practising them. Practice involves a combination of:

　　i) developing / cultivating / growing / nurturing wholesome states, and thus developing citta (mind/heart) in general: making it stronger , calmer, more centred, and open, thus cultivating character in a wholesome way;

　　ii) letting go of what has been developed, ie. not clinging to it ,so that things can develop even further, not being undermined by attachment.

In this process, it is necessary to be wary of the subtle ways in which the defilements can work:

　　a) Greed can even be for the products of the very process of growth. So it is emphasized that one should not cling to the good stases that meditation fosters, as this will undermine further growth.

　　b) Hatred, or aversion, can be focused on oneself: 'what a terrible person I am ; I must really change '. As the meditator develops some calm, there also needs to be wariness against disliking other as 'stupid, uncalm people' (a fairly common, but curable condition of 'meditator's ego').

　　c) Delusion feeds both greed and hatred. It leads to a misconstruing of the nature of the world and oneself. It takes things and people as having some sort of essence which is worthy of being the object of greed or hatred: as truly satisfactory or essentially hostile.It may trick one into grasping at some progress in practice, or into thinking that

one has progressed when is not so.

Self-development and self-transcendence

How, though, are the processes of growth and letting go to be related? The first concerns what one might call self- development, the second with selftranscendence. Are these contradictory? No- complementary! while one can find no evidence for an underlying self, a permanent I, the changing, conditioned factors of personality remain, as an empirical self . It is this empirical self which can 'grow' and develop; indeed, if one had a permanent, substantial self, it could never improve or grow, for it would be fixed and unchangeable. At Aṅguttara *Nikāya* I.249, the Buddha refers to two kinds of person. the first is 'of undeveloped *citta* (heart/ mind), undeveloped wisdom, he is limited, he has an insignificant self he dwells insignificant and miserable'. the second, on the other hand, is 'of developed virtue, developed *citta*, developed wisdom, he is not limited, he has a great self, he dwells immeasurable'. As a person lacks any permanent I, a transformation from the first to the second of these is possible!

Contemplation of phenomena as not-self enhances this process of selfdevelopment; for the less one thinks, acts and feels from an I-centred consciousness, the less uptight,defensive and small one is as a person. the functional center of personality is the *citta*, the heart-mind in the form of changing mind-sets. To the extent that there is I -identification with things, there is shrinkage and limitation of *citta* by being tied to just those things .Letting go allows an expansion of the *citta* in terms of greater awareness , wider sympathies ,and an openness to being .

It is said that the Buddhist practitioner should seek to:

>   live with himself /herself as an island , with himself as a refuge, with
> no other (person) as a refuge, (he lives) with dhamma (the teaching/
> path) as an island. with dhamma as refuge, with no other (teaching/
> path) as refuge (Dīgha-Nikāya III .58).

This is done by careful, mindful observation of bodily states, feelings. mind -states, and patterns -of -experience. By retaining mindful alertness, the practitioner keeps

to "his own pasture", and is not pulled hither and thither in reaction to sense- objects (all of which may also be contemplated as impermanent, unsatisfactory and not - self, insubstantial). He or she retains a stable centre of calm, a strong and steady empirical self. With strong mindfulness, he is not attracted or repelled by any sense-object and so dwells 'with a citta that is immeasurable' (Majjhima *Nikāya* I.270). That is, his mind expands in a field of open awareness.

The three conceits

In the Buddhist analysis of a person, then, there is seen to be no unchanging Self or 'I', and the belief that one has such an 'I' -whether consciously or unconsciously expressed- is seen as a pervasive feature of the unliberated mind. It is known as the 'I am conceit', and is seen as at the root of many human problems. In one sense, one can see it as the ego feeling. Interestingly, it is seen to have three firms, reflecting three different types of self-image. The first is the most obvious form of 'conceit': the 'superiority conceit. This is where one looks down on others in various ways and puffs oneself up by comparing oneself favourably to them. The second is the opposite of this: the 'inferiority conceit'. Here one does oneself down, and looks up to others as cleverer, more beautiful, more able.... It is to have a fixed, but negative, view of oneself. Nevertheless, such a view may be clung to, as letting go of it involves facing the challenge of change, which may be uncomfortable. The third conceit lies in between the other two. It is the 'equality conceit'. This may take two forms: a) competitive 'I'm as good as you!' attitude (perhaps arising in one who had previously felt inferior), b) a lazy, complacent 'I'm no better than others we're all the same!' attitude (which may arise in one who previously felt superior). of course, to an 'egalitarian' Westerner, it might be thought that there is nothing wrong with the 'equality conceit'. While it might be an improvement on the other two, Buddhism nevertheless sees it as a limiting and erroneous attitude. This is because it still 'I' centred. Like the other two attitudes/conceits, it is based on genuine, objective observation are acceptable; but to then pretend that such qualities are unchanging, and belong to fixed selves, is an error. All one can be certain of, based on accurate observation, is: This is what qualities there are in 'me' now; this is what qualities there are in another person now. Things are always subjects to change, though: the so-called 'superior' may fall, and the so-called 'inferior' rise. Nevertheless, wherever genuinely good qualities are found, they should be valued and cherished.

Balancing the mind

One set of good qualities to be nurtured and cherished are the 'five faculties'[4]:

    i) Trustful confidence: in one's own abilities, in the process of practice, and where it is leading. This is the factor of aspiration and resolution which motivates one in meditation. It includes a warm and joyful 'feeling for' the process , and so undermines ill-will.

    ii) Energy/Strength: the process of steadily applying oneself to the meditative process. It therefore undermines dullness and drowsiness.

    iii) Mindfulness: whose alert attentiveness ensures that the meditative process is well established. Its on-the-ball quality overcomes being sidetracked by desire for sense pleasures.

    iv) Mental unification: the state in which the mind's energies come together, without distraction or wavering. It overcomes the agitation of restlessness and worry.

    v) Wisdom: the process of clearly seeing and understanding the meditative process and related matters. It therefore undermines vacillation, by cutting through the mental haze that this breeds in.

Even such good qualities have to be treated with care, though. In particular, they have to be in the correct balanced state. While one can never have too much mindfulness, the other faculties need properly tuning. Mindfulness itself is what sees the need for this.

Too much trust and not enough wisdom means that one can be gullible or dogmatic. But too much 'wisdom' and not enough trust means that one can to be calculating and superficially intellectual: always talking/thinking about things, but never actually engaging in them- not getting one's feet wet. In other words, one needs a balance of 'heart' and 'head'.

Too much energy and not enough calming unification means that the mind is over-heated and restless. Too much unification and not enough energy means that the mind may sink into sleepiness. thus one needs a state of gently energised focused

stillness .

Such qualities ,and their balance ,are developed by both Samatha and *Vipassanā*.

Building a strong , liberated character

Samatha and *Vipassanā* work together in developing what are known as the 'thirty-seven factors which conduce to awakening',which comprise the five faculties and other sets of wholesome factors, such as those of the eightfold path. All factors of the path are seen to contribute to developing a strong empirical self (Harvey 1995 : ch .3). Indeed *Saṃyutta Nikāya* V 5 - 6 sees the noble Eightfold path as a'Dhamma-vehicle' which is so strong and integrated as to be almost like a permanent self:

> who has faith and wisdom,(these) yoked states ever lead him on,
> Moral integrity(*hiri*) is the pole, mind -organ the yoke,
> Mindfulness the watchful charioteer.
> The chariot is furnished with virtue,
> Meditative trance (*Jhāna*) its axle, energy its wheels,
> Equanimity, concentration, its shaft ; desirelessness its drapery,
> Goodwill, non -injury and seclusion are his weapons,
> Endurance is his leather coat of mail :
> (This chariot) rolls on to attain rest from exertion (Nirvāṇa).
> This is become Self -like (attaniyam),
> It is the supreme Brahma - vehicle,
> (Seated in it) the self - relying leaves the world,
> Certainly they win victory.

Likewise, the path is the way by which 'those with great selves travel' (*Itivuttaka* 28 - 29).

The fully integrated, liberated person, the Arahat, is seen to have a very selfcontrolled, self-contained empirical self. Unlike the 'fully individuated ' person of Jungian psychology, though, the Arahat has not integrated negative and positive traits. Rather, he/she has undermined all negative traits by understanding their nature and root, and undamming the energy locked up in them for use in positive states, which are developed to the highest degree. Nevertheless, each liberated person is an individual,

coloured by the kind of person they used to be: but now they are a liberated version of such a person.

It is held that, as water runs off a lotus without sticking, sense - objects do not ' stick' to an Arahat. He is not tied to the world of sense - objects by ties of attachment. By letting go of past, present and future, he is one who fully 'dwells alone' (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* II.283-4), being fully his own person, so to speak. He/she has an unshakeable ' mind like a diamond' (Aṅguttara *Nikāya* I .124), and is also compared to an ' Indra's stake' (Inda - khīla), a firmly-rooted gate - post:

> Like the earth, he does not resent; a balanced and well disciplined person is like an Indra's stake (*Dhammapada* v.95).

> By those who in the midst of pain and happiness have overcome the seamstress (craving), stand like an Indra's stake; they are neither elated nor cast down (*Theragāthā* v.663).

The Arahat's equanimity is not ruffled by the 'eight worldly states': gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, pleasure and pain.

The mind of such a person is also immeasurable, without boundaries. He/she has 'lifted the barrier' of spiritual ignorance and laid down the flag of the 'I am' conceit (*Majjhima Nikāya* I. 139). He no longer identifies with any particular group of phenomena such as his 'own' body- mind complex. As the Avadāna-śataka says of the Arahat:

> he lost all attachment to the three worlds; gold and a clod of earth were the same to him; the sky and the palm of his hand were the same to his mind;.... he had torn the egg-shell (of ignorance) by his knowledge...

The overcoming of spiritual ignorance is also likened to the dyke of an ancient pond bursting (Aṅguttara *Nikāya* II.166). When a person lets go of everything, such that 'his' identity shrinks to zero, then the mind expands to infinity. Each identification with something as 'Self' is a limitation, which restricts one and makes one 'smaller'.

The Arahat is one who both has 'self as an island ' and is a 'man of nothing' (*Sutta Nipāta* 501). He/she is mindfully aware, not pulled this way and that by sense-objects,

knowing that nothing within or beyond his empirical Self is a substantial self: so nothing is worth grasping at. This enables his empirical self to be calm, strong and well integrated, and the 'boundary' between 'self' and 'other' is seen as not of ultimate importance. The 'I am' conceit is seen as based on an illusion, and leads to both a lack of inner harmony and integration and also a lack of sympathy for others. Once 'I am' is seen as any empty mirage, there can be both a profound, imperturbable inner calm and unlimited horizons of awareness and sympathy for others.

Insight into all as not-self leads to a strong and open Selfless self: one which is recognized as a conditioned construct of wholesome, but impermanent states. From the alert openness of such a way-of-being, though, an awakened person can experience that Selfless unconditioned state that is Nirvāṇa: a Beyond that is yet available from within 'this fathom-long carcase' (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* I.62).

Conclusion

Buddhist meditation offers a set of perspectives and tools for long-term work on understanding and reconstructing the way one's mind works. It is well aware of the potentiality of the mind for fooling itself, and frequently warns against this. It seeks the balanced development of various beneficial aspects of the mind, based on a realistic assessment of certain negative aspects to be gradually undermined and abandoned. If the mind is a garden, it seeks to grow a beautiful, fragrant one; and also to get rid of various 'weeds' and 'pests' (which can then be put on the compost heap to facilitate further growth). It is therefore encouraging of growth and inner strengthening, but sees a key obstacle to this as I-centredness, thoughts of 'me' and 'mine', and fixed views about who or what 'I' am and 'I' believe.

In terms of comparisons to Western psychology, the section on Loving kindness has pointed out certain parallels to Behaviourism. *Vipassanā* meditation is clearly working to undo certain deeply ingrained cognitive faults, and so might be compared to Cognitive psychology. An emphasis on wholesome growth shows parallels to Humanistic psychology, and working towards certain altered states of consciousness is related to Transpersonal psychology. Given that Buddhism is wary of fixed attachment to views, however, it would counsel against onesided attachment to any such approach. At the end of the day, Buddhism has sought to use that which has

been found, in practice, over the ages, to facilitate the process of growing beyond the roots of suffering.

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Notes

1   As opposed to that which spontaneously arises in the mind, as a result of some past action.

2   See de Silva 1990: 247-51 on other 'behaviourial' aspects of Buddhist practice.

3   Ñāṇamoli, 1975:102-111, partly extracted in Conze 1559:116-21, and used as a basis for Mann and Youd, 1992.

4   Rowlands, 1982:62-7; Nyanaponika 1965: 61-7; Conze, 1971.

RODERICK S. BUCKNELL

Conditioned Arising Evolves:
Variation and Change in Textual Accounts of the
Paṭicca-samuppāda Doctrine

The doctrine of "Conditioned Arising" (Pali: *paṭicca-samuppāda*) continues to attract attention in Buddhist studies for several good reasons, most importantly because it occupies a central place in the Buddhist doctrinal structure yet presents some formidable problems of interpretation. One source of these problems is the existence of several different versions of the doctrine. How this variation might be accounted for is a question that has been addressed by a succession of scholars throughout this century. Much remains to be done toward clarifying such issues, and the present article is a further attempt in that direction. It presents a comparative analysis of four versions of the PS (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) doctrine found in the Pali sutras and in their Chinese and Sanskrit counterparts, and on that basis it offers an explanation of how those versions may have developed from earlier forms.[1]

The standard version

The doctrine of Conditioned Arising is best known in the following form:[2]

- Conditioned by ignorance (*avijjā-paccayā*) are activities (*saṅkhārā*).

1. This article is based on a paper presented at the First Joint Australian and New Zealand Religious Studies Conference at Lincoln University, New Zealand, in July 1996. I am grateful to Paul Harrison, Choong Mun-keat, and Antonio Ferreira-Jardim for directing me to relevant literature.

2. The translations of terms are provisional. The source (one of many available) is Pali SN 2: 1-4, with Chinese counterpart SA 85a-b and Sanskrit counterpart Tp 157-164 & 98. Here "Tp" denotes Chandrabhal TRIPATHI: *Fünfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidānasaṃyukta (= Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden VIII)*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1962. In text references, DN, MN, SN, AN = Pali Dīghanikāya, etc. (PTS editions); DA, MA, SA, EA = Chinese Dīrghāgama etc. (Taishō edition; DA and MA in vol. 1, SA and EA in vol. 2); DA' etc. = extra Chinese versions of individual sutras. Identification of counterparts follows AKANUMA Chizen, *The Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas*, (1929) Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1990.

— Conditioned by activities is consciousness (*viññāna*).
— Conditioned by consciousness is name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*).
— Conditioned by name-and-form is the sixfold sense-base (*saḷāyatana*).
— Conditioned by the sixfold sense-base is contact (*phassa*).
— Conditioned by contact is feeling (*vedanā*).
— Conditioned by feeling is craving (*taṇhā*).
— Conditioned by craving is clinging (*upādāna*).
— Conditioned by clinging is becoming (*bhava*).
— Conditioned by becoming is birth (*jāti*).
— Conditioned by birth are aging-and-death (*jarā-maraṇa*), grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair.

Thus is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.

This series of twelve items, linked by the pattern "X-*paccayā* Y" (conditioned by X [is/are] Y), purports to explain the origin of suffering (*dukkha*). In effect, it is an elaboration of the second noble truth, tracing the chain of causal dependence back beyond craving (*taṇhā*) to its ultimate origin in ignorance (*avijjā*).[3]

Often the series is presented in reverse, the causal chain being traced backward from aging-and-death to birth, from birth to becoming, and so on to ignorance. Again, the series, whether in forward order or in reverse, is often stated in negative form: through the ceasing of ignorance, activities cease; and so on down to the ceasing of aging-and-death and of "this entire mass of suffering."[4] In such cases, the description amounts to an elaboration of the third noble truth.[5]

Textual presentations of the standard PS formula occasionally include explanations of its twelve component items. These exhibit a few disagreements between Pali and Chinese/Sanskrit versions of the same sutra, as shown in the following summary. In cases of disagreement, the textual sources are indicated; and for ease of presentation, the two components of nāma-rūpa are separated.[6]

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3. Identity with the second noble truth is made explicit at AN 1:177.5-14.
4. Reverse and negative formulations at MN 1: 261-4 = MA 768a-c.
5. Negative formulation identified with third noble truth at AN 1:177.15-26.
6. At MN 1: 49-54 = EA 797b-c and SN 2: 2-4 = SA 85a-b = Tp 157-164 (Tp definitions agree with SA).

1. *avijjā*: ignorance concerning suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way that leads to its ceasing
2. *saṅkhārā*: activities of body, speech, and mind (*citta*)
3. *viññāṇa*: consciousness associated with eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind (*mano*)

4a. **nāma**:
- SN, MN = EA: feeling, perception, volition, contact, mind-work (*vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phassa, manasikāra*)
- SA: feeling, perception, activities, consciousness (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇa*)

4b. *rūpa*: the four great elements (earth, water, fire, air) and materiality derived from them

5. *saḷāyatana*: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind (*mano*)
6. *phassa*: contact of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind
7. **vedanā**:
- SN, MN: feeling arising from contact of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind
- SA, EA: feeling that is pleasant, unpleasant, neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant

8. **taṇhā**:
- SN, MN: craving for forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects, mental objects (*dhammā*)
- SA: craving for sensuality, form, the formless (*kāma, rūpa, arūpa*)
- EA: craving for sensuality, becoming, non-becoming (*kāma, bhava, vibhava*)

9. *upādāna*: clinging to sensuality, views, rules and vows, self-theory
10. *bhava*: becoming in the realms of sensuality, form, the formless
11. *jāti*: birth, rebirth, ...
12. *jarā-maraṇa*: aging, decrepitude, ... ; death, decease, ...

In the case of item 4, *nāma-rūpa*, there is a partial discrepancy between the two explanations of *nāma*, on which more will be said later. In the case of item 7, *vedanā*, it appears that the two explanations amount to two different ways of classifying the same mental factor: either according to the categories of feeling itself (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral), or according to the sense organs that give rise to it. No disagreement is necessarily implied regarding the identity of the item *vedanā* itself. In

the case of item 8, *taṇhā*, the three explanations differ in how they classify the possible objects of craving; as before, this does not appear to signify disagreement about the item itself (*taṇhā*). More substantial disagreements in some of the definitions are found in other textual sources; however, they are associated with disagreements about the composition of the chain of conditioned arising itself, to which topic we now turn.

Other versions of the series

The twelve-membered formula summarized above is referred to here as "the standard version" because it is by far the most frequently attested account of PS. Some less common variations on this basic theme also claim attention.

A common source of variation is simple abbreviation of the series. Sometimes the chain that culminates in birth-and-death is made to begin only at item 5, the sense organs,[7] or even at item 9, clinging.[8] It is likely that abbreviation of this sort merely amounts to a less than complete representation of the process: only that portion of the series was described which was relevant in the context within which the discourse in question was delivered.[9] Such cases will not be considered here. More in need of attention are cases where items are omitted from within the series or are listed in a different sequence.[10] Three such cases of substantial departure from the standard sequence will be examined.

The first case is the following, found in just four Pali sutras and their Chinese/Sanskrit counterparts, most notably the lengthy Mahānidāna-sutta.[11] For ease of comparison, the numbering system of the standard version is retained in presenting this version.

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7. E.g. SN 2: 36.30-37.21.

8. E.g. SN 3: 94.4-11.

9. Erich FRAUWALLNER takes such cases as evidence that the standard version is a combination of two shorter series. *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, vol. 1 (Salzburg: O. Miller 1953), pp. 197-199.

10. Sometimes extra items, e.g. *saññā* and *cetanā*, are included within the series; e.g. SA 84a25-b1. Such cases cannot be considered in this brief study.

11. DN2: 55-63 = DA 61b = DA' 242b-c = MA 578b-9c = MA' 844b-5b; DN 2:30-35 = Fu 32-35(left) = DA 7b-c; SN 2:112-15 = SA 81a-b = Tp 107-9; SN 2:104-6 = SA 80b-c = Fu 32-35 (right, contra Tp 97-98). ("Fu" = FUKITA Takamichi. "Bonbun 'Daihonkyō' engisetsu no fukugen ni tsuite" [On restoring PS in the Sanskrit Mahāvadāna-sūtra], *Bukkyō Shigaku Kenkyū* 24.2 (1982): 26-43.)

4. *nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form)
3. *viññāṇa* (consciousness)
4. *nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form)
[5. *saḷāyatana* (sixfold sense-base)]
6. *phassa* (contact)
7. *vedanā* (feeling)
8. *taṇhā* (craving)
9. *upādāna* (clinging)
10. *bhava* (becoming)
11. *jāti* (birth)
12. *jarā-maraṇa* etc. (aging-and-death etc.)

The bracketing of item 5 is to indicate that this link is not always present: it is missing in the Mahānidāna-sutta (in Pali and in three of the four Chinese versions)[12] but present in the other sources. However, the main feature of this version of the PS formula is that items 1 and 2 of the standard list are missing, their place being taken by a repetition of item 4. For example, in the Mahānidāna the Buddha, having traced the chain back, link by link, from aging-and-death to contact (*phassa*), then states that contact is conditioned by name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*), name-and-form is conditioned by consciousness (*viññāṇa*), and consciousness is conditioned by name-and-form. Consciousness and name-and-form are represented as conditioning each other mutually, and this causal loop is confirmed when the series is reiterated in summary in the forward direction:[13]

> Conditioned by name-and-form is consciousness.
> Conditioned by consciousness is name-and-form.
> Conditioned by name-and form is contact... .

12. *Saḷāyatana* is lacking at DN 2: 56.19-26 = DA 61b20 = DA' 243b5-7 = MA 579c4-7 but present at MA' 845a24-28. The anomalous inclusion of the standard version (with *saḷāyatana*) at DA 60b12-29 is likely to represent a late addition, according to Tilmann VETTER: "Zwei schwierige Stellen im Mahā-nidānasutta: Zur Qualität der Überlieferung im Pāli-Kanon," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 38 (1994): 137-160, p. 141. VETTER also notes (p. 142, n. 21) that the MA' version of the sutra is relatively late historically and shows signs of sectarian modification.

13. DN 2: 56.31-32 = DA 61b20 = DA' 243c2-3 = MA 580a1-2 = MA' 845b11-12; DN 2: 32.32-3 = Fu 35(left); SN 2: 114.18-20; SN 2: 104.33-5 = SA 80c3-6 = Fu 35 (right).

There exist some instances of equivocation about the beginning of the series. In one of the sources cited above, we find that where the Pali sutra has the loop, its Chinese/Sanskrit counterpart has a simple linear series beginning with *viññāṇa* in both backward and forward listings, i.e. it omits the initial occurrence of *nāma-rūpa*; and then, in a concluding paragraph the Pali switches to an eleven-membered linear series beginning with *saṅkhārā* (activities), while the Chinese/Sanskrit has the full twelve-membered series beginning with *avijjā* (ignorance).[14]

Another example is provided by two sutras, numbers 49 and 50 in the Nidāna-saṃyutta of SN, both of which are titled Ariyasāvaka-sutta.[15] Sutra no. 50 has the standard series beginning at *avijjā*. No. 49 is identical with no. 50 except that, in some editions, it begins the series not at *avijjā* but at *viññāṇa* (without the loop). In the PTS edition, the editor states in footnotes to no. 49 that the first two items (*avijjā* and *saṅkhārā*) were present in the Burmese source manuscript but not in the two Sinhalese ones.[16] Each of these two sutras is represented by the same counterpart in the Chinese SA, namely SA sutra no. 350.[17] This situation is not uncommon in the Nikāyas/Āgamas; even within this same *saṃyutta* one finds two further cases where two consecutive and nearly identical Pali sutras have a single Chinese counterpart.[18] The natural interpretation of such cases is that the two closely similar Pali sutras are divergent derivatives of a single earlier Pali sutra. In the case of the cited sutras 49 and 50, the divergence evidently arose out of uncertainty about the beginning portion of the PS series.

As if to deny such cases, some accounts of the looped version state explicitly that the chain of causation goes no further back than the loop:

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14. SN 2: 106 = SA 80c12-16 = Fu 39 (right).

15. SN 2:77-79 & 79-80. The *uddāna* (SN 2: 80.17) has *dve ariyasāvake*.

16. SN 2:78, nn. 1 & 3; *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, Part II (trans. Mrs. RHYS DAVIDS, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1982), p. 54, nn. 1-3. The Nalanda edition (SN vol. 2, p. 66, n. 1) says sutta 49 lacks *avijjā* and *saṅkhārā* in the Siamese canon.

17. SA 98b.

18. SN #12.53 & 54 = SA #285 and SN #12.55 & 56 = SA #284, at SN 2:86-89 = SA 79b-80b. Contrast the situation where two non-identical consecutive Pali sutras taken together (joined end-to-end) are represented in a single Chinese sutra; e.g. SN #12.1-2 = SA #298 at SN 2:1-4 = SA 85a-b = Tp 157-164 (note 2, above). Such are the complications involved in identifying Pali-Chinese counterparts.

"This consciousness turns back at name-and-form; it goes no further."[19] Yet one can also find this statement followed almost immediately in the same sutra by a listing of the standard version, in which the series does go further back.[20] These contradictions represent a serious problem of interpretation.

Of the four instances of the complete looped version, only one provides explanations of the individual links, namely the Mahānidāna-sutta (in Pali and Chinese). Those explanations agree with the ones cited earlier for the standard version, except in the cases of *viññāṇa* and *nāma-rūpa*.[21] Whereas the sutras quoted earlier explain *viññāṇa* as consciousness associated with the sixfold sense-base, the Mahānidāna explains it as consciousness that descends into the mother's womb at the moment of conception.[22] And where the sutras quoted earlier have, for *nāma-rūpa*, definitions that disagree partially regarding the *nāma* component, the Mahānidāna has no definition at all. Instead it has, in four of the five cited versions of the sutra, a discussion of the relationship between *nāma-rūpa* and *phassa* (contact), which will be examined below.

The second of the three alternatives to the standard series to be considered here might be called "the Sutta-nipāta version" because its only occurrence is in a sutra of the Sn (Sutta-nipāta), one that has no known Chinese counterpart.[23] This version was early recognized by LA VALLÉE POUSSIN as important in providing possible clues to the early develop-

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19. SN 2: 104.30-31 = SA 80c3 = Fu 35 (right); DN 2:32 = Fu 35 (left).

20. E.g. SA 80c3-4 & 9-16.

21. As regards the explanations of the other items, the Pali Mahānidāna agrees with the Pali sutras cited for the standard version, and the Chinese agree with the Chinese – except for some discrepancies in the case of *taṇhā*. The Pali at first lists six types of *taṇhā* based on the sense objects (DN 2: 58.12-13), but later lists three: *kāma-taṇhā, bhava-taṇhā, vibhava-taṇhā* (DN 2: 61.27-28); DA lists the same three (DA 60c13); and the other Chinese sources list just the first two of them: *kāma-taṇhā* and *bhava-taṇhā* (DA' 243a19-20 = MA 579b22 = MA' 845 a8-9). In the Chinese, the identification of two kinds of *taṇhā* is immediately followed by the phrase "these two dharmas," and in the DN version the identification of three kinds is incongruously followed by the same phrase (*ime dve dhammā*, DN 2:61.33). It is likely, therefore, that DN formerly listed just the two kinds, despite Buddhaghosa's suggestion that the phrase refers to a different two kinds of *taṇhā* (Sumaṅgalavilāsinī 500).

22. DN 2: 63 = DA 61b9-12 = DA' 243b18-22 = MA 579c17-20 = MA' 845b6-8.

23. Sn 139-149, #728-751.

ment of the PS series.[24] The sutra in question says of each item that it is a condition for the arising of suffering (*dukkha*). It does not explicitly link each item with the next; however, the sequence in which the items appear in such statements matches closely that of the standard version, as can be seen from the following summary of the Sn series:

	upadhi	(substrate)
1.	*avijjā*	(ignorance)
2.	*saṅkhārā*	(activities)
3.	*viññāṇa*	(consciousness)
6.	*phassa*	(contact)
7.	*vedanā*	(feeling)
8.	*taṇhā*	(craving)
9.	*upādāna*	(clinging)
10.	*bhava*	(becoming)
11.	*jāti*	(birth)
12.	*maraṇa*	(death)
	ārambhā	(exertions)
	āhārā	(nutriments)
	iñjitā	(movements)

This omits 4. *nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form) and 5. *saḷāyatana* (sixfold sense-base), and it adds at the ends four items not found in the standard version.[25]

The one remaining version of the PS series to be considered here is represented in the following formulation, found in much the same wording in many different sutras.[26]

> And what, monks, is the arising of suffering?
> Conditioned by the eye (*cakkhu*) and visible forms (*rūpa*) arises eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*).
> The coming together of the three is contact (*phassa*).
> Conditioned by contact is feeling (*vedanā*).
> Conditioned by feeling is craving (*taṇhā*).

24. Louis DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN: *Théorie des Douze Causes* (London: Luzac 1913), pp. 1-5.

25. Following *iñjitā* a further four items are named, but with no reference to causal dependence; the word *paccayā* is absent. Thus, *iñjitā* is where the causal chain ends.

26. E.g. SN 4: 86.17-87.27 = SA 54c22-25.

Conditioned by craving is clinging (*upādāna*).
Conditioned by clinging is becoming (*bhava*).
Conditioned by becoming is birth (*jāti*).
Conditioned by birth are aging-and-death (*jarā-maraṇa*), ...
Thus is the arising of suffering.

The whole is then repeated in turn with each of the remaining five sense organs, sense objects, and classes of consciousness: "Conditioned by ear and sounds, ear-consciousness arises," and similarly for the nose and odors, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile objects, and the mind (*mano*) and mind objects (*dhammas*).

The resemblance of this to the three versions already noted becomes more apparent if we bring together the six repetitions of the passage, and apply the definitions examined earlier. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are together the sixfold sense-base, i.e. they can be collectively identified with *saḷāyatana*, item 5 of the standard version. The corresponding six classes of consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.) are together identical with *viññāṇa*, item 3 of the standard version. For the six sense objects (visible forms etc.) a counterpart in the standard version is not immediately apparent. Despite this, a close overall correspondence exists, as is evident from the following summary representation of the quoted version using the numbering of the standard version:

5. six sense organs (= *saḷāyatana*)
   plus six sense objects (= ?)
3. six consciousnesses (= *viññāṇa*)
6. *phassa*
7. *vedanā*
8. *taṇhā*
9. *upādāna*
10. *bhava*
11. *jāti*
12. *jarā-maraṇa*

Clearly, we have here another version of the PS formula. For reasons that will soon become apparent, it will henceforth be called "the branched version."

The familiar twelve-membered account of PS is, therefore, just one among several versions. Alongside this standard version there also exist the looped version (with or without *saḷāyatana*), the Sn version, and the

branched version; and one can find in the Nikāyas/Āgamas several other series which differ more markedly from the standard account of PS and which might be included in a more comprehensive comparative study. The present examination of just four closely similar versions therefore represents only a partial attempt to account for such variation.

As regards their content, the versions selected here for study fall naturally into two groups. The standard and Sn versions agree in tracing the chain of causation back to activities and ignorance; the branched and looped versions agree in not mentioning those two links. This grouping is recognized in the analysis that now follows; the branched and looped versions will be considered together, followed by the standard and Sn versions.

The branched and looped versions

In the branched version the causal chain originates with the sense organs and their corresponding objects: "Conditioned by the eye and visible forms arises eye-consciousness." The subsequent repetitions complete the set of six senses (the five physical senses and the mind), as shown:

cakkhu (eye)	+ *rūpa* (form)	→	*cakkhu-viññāna* (eye-consciousness)
sota (ear)	+ *sadda* (sound)	→	*sota-viññāna* (ear-consciousness)
ghāna (nose)	+ *gandha* (odor)	→	*ghāna-viññāna* (nose-consciousness)
jivhā (tongue)	+ *rasa* (flavor)	→	*jivhā-viññāna* (tongue-consciousness)
kāya (body)	+ *phoṭṭhabba* (tactile)	→	*kāya-viññāna* (body-consciousness)
mano (mind)	+ *dhamma* (image)	→	*mano-viññāna* (mind-consciousness)

The coming together of the three items in each horizontal set (e.g. eye, visible forms, eye-consciousness) is equated with contact (*phassa*, i.e. eye-contact etc.), which then conditions feeling (*vedanā*), and so on. It was briefly noted above that comparison with other versions of PS is facilitated if one combines the items in each *vertical* set. Such combination is recognized explicitly in some textual accounts. For example, the three sets of six are sometimes referred to as the six internal sense-bases (*cha ajjhatikāni āyatanāni* = eye etc.), six external sense-bases (*cha bāhirāni āyatanāni* = visible forms etc.), and six consciousness groups (*cha viññāna-kāyā*).[27] The first of these sets of six is also recognized in

27. E.g. MN 3: 280-1 = MA 562b-c, DN 3: 243-4 = DA'231b-c. The sixfold grouping continues as far as *taṇhā*. Also cf. the three consecutive *saṃyuttas* at SN 3: 225-240, each of which is clearly derived from a single sutra. In each the six

the widely used term *saḷ-āyatana* (sixfold sense-base). Furthermore, in
the Pali tradition, as seen earlier, accounts of PS which explain the com-
ponent items define *vedanā* and *taṇhā* in terms of the six sense fields,
thereby implicitly recognizing the same summation of six separate
series. Such considerations justify recognizing the three sets of six,
shown above, as constituting a single triad: 6 sense organs + 6 sense
objects → 6 consciousnesses. Applying this to the branched version
means that it and the looped version compare as shown in Figure 1.

Between the two versions, there is complete correspondence from
phassa to the end of the series; and, as Figure 1 reveals, the items pre-
ceding *phassa* match up partially. The correspondence between the two
"consciousness" items is actually defective. Accounts of the looped
version explain *viññāṇa* as consciousness that descends into the mother's
womb at conception; the definition of *viññāṇa* in terms of the six senses
is associated not with the looped version but with the standard version.
On the other hand, as noted earlier, sutras dealing with the looped
version often switch between it and the standard version as if there were
little to distinguish them. This suggests that the difference in definition –
sense consciousness versus rebirth consciousness – may be less signifi-
cant than it appears. This question will be re-examined later. For the
present, suffice it to note the broad correspondence evident in Figure 1.
Just one item in each series remains completely unpaired, namely the six
sense objects on the left, and *nāma-rūpa* on the right. Accordingly,
attention now focuses on the meaning of the term *nāma-rūpa*.

Since accounts of the looped version provide no definition of *nāma-
rūpa*, we turn first to the definitions of this item that accompany
accounts of the standard version. These indicate that the second compo-
nent, *rūpa*, refers to the four great elements (earth, water, fire, air) and
their derivatives. This is one of several meanings borne by the word
rūpa according to context. In another usage *rūpa* means "visible form,"
i.e. the object of eye-consciousness; this is the case in the opening sen-
tence quoted above: "Conditioned by eye (*cakkhuṃ*) and visible forms
(*rūpe*)."[28] However, the definitions indicate that the *rūpa* in *nāma-rūpa*
has the other meaning; it denotes physicality, materiality.

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senses are covered not by repeating the entire series for each sense field but by
specifying the six sense fields within each item.

28. On the ambiguity of *rūpa* cf. D. SEYFORT RUEGG: "Some reflections on the
place of philosophy in the study of Buddhism," JIABS 18.2 (1995): 145-181,
p. 146.

As for *nāma* (literally "name"), one of the two available definitions (that given in SA) equates it with the second to fifth of the five *khandha*s, the five aggregates into which the person or being is often analyzed. The first of the *khandha*s is *rūpa*, defined as physicality, as above; the remaining four, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā*, *viññāṇa* (feeling, perception, activities, consciousness), are mental. Thus, on this definition *nāma-rūpa* represents a classification of the *khandha*s into mental and physical. The other definition (given in SN, MN, and EA) equates *nāma* with *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā*, *phassa* (contact), and *manasikāra* (mind-work), which again are all mental factors. Thus, the available definitions, despite disagreeing with each other, appear to justify the common free translation of *nāma-rūpa* as "mind and body."[29]

These textual explanations of *nāma-rūpa* are problematic. In addition to the disagreement regarding the definition of *nāma*, there are discrepancies arising out of the place of *nāma-rūpa* in the PS series. Both definitions indicate that *nāma* encompasses *vedanā* (feeling), yet *vedanā* is said to arise further down the causal series; and one of the two definitions indicates that *nāma* also encompasses *phassa* (contact), which again is further down the series. (In the standard version *nāma-rūpa* is item 4, while *phassa* and *vedanā* are items 6 and 7.) These discrepancies could be explained away by suggesting that the causal links are not to be understood as strictly ordered, but that would amount to a serious weakening of the notion of causal dependence (*idappaccayatā*), which the PS doctrine is said to exemplify.

A further anomaly concerning *nāma-rūpa* is that, as noted above, the Mahānidāna-sutta, while providing definitions for all the other items in the looped version, fails to provide one for *nāma-rūpa*; instead it goes into a discussion of the causal connection between *nāma-rūpa* and the next item, *phassa* (*saḷāyatana* is omitted). That discussion is dealt with by REAT (1987) in an instructive study of the notion of *nāma-rūpa*.[30] REAT translates the Pali passage in question as follows:[31]

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29. E.g. Maurice WALSH: *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: Wisdom 1987), p. 223 (translation of Pali Mahānidāna-sutta).

30. N. Ross REAT: "Some Fundamental Concepts of Buddhist Psychology," *Religion* 17 (1987): 15-28.

31. DN 2: 62 = DA 61b = DA′ 243b = MA 579c. Quoted in Dharmaskandha in Chinese: T#1537 at T26: 509b16-27 ("T" = Taishō edition); and in Sanskrit: Siglinde DIETZ: *Fragmente des Dharmaskandha: Ein Abhidharma-Text in Sanskrit aus Gilgit* (= Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in

– If, Ānanda, those qualities, characteristics, signs, and indications by which the name-group (*nāma-kāya*) is manifested ... were absent, would there be the manifestation of verbal contact (*adhivacana-samphassa*) in (i.e. "with regard to") the form-group (*rūpakāya*)?

– There would not, venerable sir.

– If, Ānanda, those qualities etc. by which the form-group is manifested ... were absent, would there be the manifestation of sensual contact (*paṭigha-samphassa*) in the name-group?

– There would not, venerable sir. ...

– And if, Ānanda, those qualities etc. by which name-and-form are manifested ... were absent, would there be any manifestation of (any kind of) contact (*phassa*)?

– There would not, venerable sir.

– Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, the basis, the origin, the condition of contact, namely name-and-form.

REAT reasons that this identifies *nāma* and *rūpa* as two classes of object of consciousness: *nāma* is conceptual (*adhivacana*); *rūpa* is sensory (*paṭigha*, literally "impact"). He links this terminology to the general Indian idea of "the interdependence of concept (*nāma*) and thing conceptualized (*rūpa*), or name and named," citing the usage of the term *nāma-rūpa* in the pre-Buddhist Upaniṣads.[32] He concludes that "adhivacana (verbal) and paṭigha (sensual), as categories of *phassa*, are an alternative to the more commonly enumerated six kinds of *phassa*, and thus that *nāma-rūpa* is a dual categorization of the six types of objects of consciousness."[33]

REAT is saying that the term *nāma-rūpa* refers to a grouping of the six types of sense objects into two categories: the *rūpa* category, comprising physical sense objects of the five types (visible forms, sounds, odors, flavors, tactile objects), and the *nāma* category, comprising non-physical sense objects (dhammas, mind objects). The textual basis for his argument is strengthened by the fact that the same account of the causal con-

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Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 3. Folge, Nr. 142) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1984), pp.42-43. The passage is lacking in the other Chinese counterpart, MA'845, which has the intervening *saḷāyatana*. REAT, who considers only the Pali, elides the third of the four questions, which is fortuitously appropriate because the Chinese versions (and Dharmaskandha) lack this question. They also lack the phrases "in the form-group" and "in the name-group" (as noted by VETTER, pp. 147-8), which yields a more coherent reading; e.g.: "If those qualities by which the form-group is manifested were absent, would there be the manifestation of sensual contact?"

32. REAT, pp. 18, 22.

33. REAT, p. 25.

nection between *nāma-rūpa* and *phassa* appears in three of the four extant Chinese counterparts of the Pali Mahānidāna-sutta.[34] The argument itself is supported by similar conclusions reached by YINSHUN in an earlier (1981) discussion of the same problem of interpreting *nāma-rūpa*, this time in relation to a variant of the branched version.[35]

YINSHUN, who bases his analysis entirely on Chinese sources, quotes the following passage from a sutra in the Saṃyuktāgama:[36]

> Within the body there is this consciousness (*shi = viññāṇa*), and outside the body there is name-and-form (*ming-se = nāma-rūpa*). Conditioned by these two arises contact. Contacted by these six sense-contacts, the ignorant, untaught worldling experiences painful and pleasurable feelings variously arisen.

YINSHUN draws the natural conclusion: "Consciousness and name-and-form are opposed as subject and object."[37] In other words, the term *nāma-rūpa* denotes the sense objects.

The reference to *nāma-rūpa* as located "outside the body" is in keeping with the terminology noted earlier, in which the sixfold sense-base is "inside" and the corresponding objects (which would include even the objects of the mind sense-base, *manāyatana*) are "outside."[38] Clearly, then, the passage that YINSHUN quotes is discussing a variant of the branched version in which the six senses are combined; the six sense objects are collectively covered by the term *nāma-rūpa*.

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34. Also in quotes in Dharmaskandha; see note 31, above. REAT's reasoning (based only on the Pali) is criticized, but with little foundation, by Peter HARVEY: *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism* (Richmond: Curzon 1995), pp. 131-2; and by Sue HAMILTON: *Identity and Experience: The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism* (London: Luzac 1996), p. 126.

35. [Shi] YINSHUN: *Weishi-xue tan yuan* [Studies in the Origins of the Vijñānavāda] (= Miaoyunji No. 3) (Taipei: Zhengwen 1981), pp. 16-17, 20-22. REAT was evidently unaware of YINSHUN's work.

36. SA 83c25-27 = SN 2:24.1-4 = Tp 141-2, my translation. YINSHUN (p. 21) quotes the original text, but amends the Taishō punctuation to yield the meaning: "... Within there is this consciousness-body (= *viññāṇa-kāya*), and outside there is name-and-form ..." However, the Sanskrit (not mentioned by YINSHUN) supports the Taishō punctuation (see note 39, below). In any case, the discrepancy does not affect YINSHUN's argument.

37. YINSHUN, p. 21.

38. MN 3: 280-1 = MA 562b. On mind objects (dhammā) as located externally (*bāhira*) cf. MN 1: 191.15-18 = MA 467a13-15.

The Sanskrit counterpart of the quoted Chinese passage differs only slightly in meaning. For the first sentence it has: "Thus, this (is) his body with consciousness, and outside (is) name-and-form."[39] The Pali counterpart, however, differs significantly. It reads: "Thus indeed, this (is) the body, and outside (is) name-and-form."[40] Lacking the reference to consciousness, the Pali is less readily recognizable as an account of the beginning of the branched version. Nevertheless, it confirms the essential point on which YINSHUN's reasoning depends: *nāma-rūpa* is located "outside."

In any case, there is another Pali passage that points to just this interpretation of *nāma-rūpa*, a point that was noticed earlier again (1971) by WATSUJI.[41] Set in the context of guarding against the false notions of "I" and "my," this often-repeated passage reads: "Lord, how knowing, how seeing, is there no I-making, my-making, or tendency to conceit, with regard to *this body with consciousness and, outside, all nimittas*?"[42] The italicized phrase parallels "this his body with consciousness, and outside name-and-form," quoted above from the Sanskrit, but with *nāma-rūpam* replaced by *sabbanimittesu* (Chinese: *yiqie xiang*), "all nimittas." Of the meanings of *nimitta* given in the *Pali-English Dictionary* the appropriate one here is certainly "outward appearance, mark, characteristic, attribute, phenomenon (opp. essence)."[43] And the reference is likely to be to all visible forms, sounds, etc., in other words to the totality of sense objects.

These observations by WATSUJI, YINSHUN, and REAT indicate that *nāma-rūpa*, far from signifying "mind-and-body" or something similar, is a collective term for the six types of sense object.[44] (The reference, in

39. *ity ayañ cāsya savijñānakaḥ kāyo [ba]hirdhā ca nāmarūpam.* Tp 142.

40. *iti ayaṃ ceva kāyo bahiddhā ca nāmarūpaṃ,* SN 2:24.1-2. REAT (p. 18) also quotes this passage in support of his interpretation.

41. WATSUJI Tetsurō: *Genshi Bukkyō no Jissen Tetsugaku* [Practical Philosophy of Early Buddhism] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 1971), pp. 228-231.

42. *imasmiñ ca saviññāṇake kāye bahiddhā ca sabbanimittesu*; e.g. SN 2: 252 = SA 50c; SN 3: 135-7 = SA 2:5a-b = SA 2:50c-51a; AN 1: 132-3 = SA 2:255b-256a. Cf. the wording in notes 39 and 40, above.

43. PED, p. 367.

44. The same understanding of *nāma-rūpa* is taken for granted, without supporting discussion, by MIZUNO Kōgen: *Primitive Buddhism* (Ube: Karinbunko 1969), pp. 142-144; and YAMADA Ishii: "Premises and Implications of Interdependence," in Somaratna BALASOORIYA et al. (eds.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London: Gordon Fraser 1980: 267-293), p. 272. It is rejected,

the case of *rūpa*, is evidently not to the physical objects of the world around us, but rather to the sense data – patterns of color and shape, auditory impressions, and so on – that impinge on us via the sense organs.) None of the three researchers suggests why the definitions of *nāma-rūpa* given in the sutras conflict with this interpretation, a question that will be examined below. Nevertheless the case for the interpretation is strong.

This revised understanding of *nāma-rūpa* has implications for the questions raised earlier concerning the relationship between the branched and looped versions. If adopted, it makes the correspondence between the two versions even closer than is shown in Figure 1. A further connecting line can now be inserted, joining "6 sense objects" on the left with "*nāma-rūpa*" on the right. There is now a complete pairing of items between the two versions, though with questions remaining concerning the discrepant definitions of *nāma-rūpa* and *viññāṇa*.

The difference in sequence proves, on examination, to be not quite as Figure 1 may suggest. For the looped version the description follows the same "X-*paccayā* Y" pattern throughout, with each item conditioned by the item preceding it in the list: "Conditioned by name-and-form is consciousness. Conditioned by consciousness is name-and-form. Conditioned by name-and-form is the sixfold sense-base..." and so on. The pattern of dependency relationships in the looped version can, therefore, be represented as shown in Figure 2, section (b). The arrows represent the conditional relationship: the item ahead of each arrow is conditioned by, or dependent on, the item behind the arrow. The whole has a simple linear structure except at its beginning, where the pair of arrows represents the reciprocal relationship between *viññāṇa* and *nāma-rūpa*.[45]

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again without supporting discussion, by Lambert SCHMITHAUSEN: "The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997), http://jbe.la.psu.edu/4/schm1.html, note 67. Relevant here is a variant of the standard version of PS at Vibhaṅga 138.30-32: "... *viññāṇapaccayā nāmaṃ, nāmapaccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ, chaṭṭhāyatanapaccayā phasso, ...*" This associates *nāma* with "the sixth sense-base" (*chaṭṭhāyatana*). It thus supports the proposition that *nāma-rūpa* represents a classification of sense objects into mental (sensed via the sixth sense-base) and physical (sensed via the other five bases).

45. Similar notation is adopted by YINSHUN, p. 24; VETTER, p. 144; and Bhikkhu BODHI: *The Great Discourse on Causation: The Mahānidāna Sutta and Its Commentaries* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society 1995), p. 43.

In the case of the branched version the pattern of relationships is less uniform: "Conditioned by the eye and visible forms arises eye-consciousness. The coming together of the three is contact. Conditioned by contact is feeling... ." The first two items named, the sense organ and its object, are not linked by any dependency relationship; neither is said to be a condition for the other. These two together condition the arising of the next item, *viññāṇa* (consciousness). Those three together *are* the next item, *phassa* (contact). *Phassa* conditions the arising of *vedanā* (feeling), and so on thereafter in linear series to the end. The pattern of relationships is, therefore, properly represented by a branching structure, as in Figure 2, section (a).

From *vedanā* to the end the branched and looped versions agree; and, as demonstrated above, the seeming discrepancies in the composition of their early portions are largely due to differing terminology. Consequently, an adequate comparison of the early portions of the two versions can be achieved by applying the terminology of the looped version to the components of the branched version, and setting the resulting structures side by side, as in Figure 2.

Between these two structures there is close resemblance but also substantial difference, difference which is the more noteworthy because of the emphasis on precise identification of dependency relationships that characterizes the PS doctrine. This combination of similarity and difference demands explanation. There are, broadly speaking, two possibilities:

(a) The two versions accurately represent two distinct teachings imparted by the Buddha, which happen to have much in common.

(b) The two versions represent a single teaching imparted by the Buddha, the present differences between them being due to faulty transmission of the tradition.

Favoring explanation (a) is the apparent discrepancy in the significance of *viññāṇa* in the two versions. The *viññāṇa* of the branched version is the summation of the six types of consciousness associated with the sense organs, which makes that version read like an account of the psychological process of sensory perception. In contrast, the looped version, for which *viññāṇa* is defined as rebirth consciousness, reads like an account of events associated with the process of physical rebirth.[46] Against this,

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46. These two correspond to two different understandings of PS (specifically, of the standard version) that are current among practicing Buddhists. Prominent Sangha

however, is the fact, noted earlier, that sutras dealing with the looped version often switch between it and the standard version, for which *viññāṇa* is defined as consciousness associated with the six senses.

As for explanation (b), according to which the branched and looped versions developed out of a single earlier version through faulty transmission, this is by no means incompatible with the existence of two different definitions of *viññāṇa*. The postulated rearrangement of the items preceding *phassa* (contact) might have been accompanied by a redefinition of one of those items (i.e. *viññāṇa*), or might even have been the cause of that redefinition. On the other hand, the suggestion that such rearrangement and redefinition occurred can be taken seriously only if the details of the postulated changes can be spelled out and shown to be reasonable in light of all relevant data.

An evaluation of the relative merits of the two possible explanations will, therefore, depend crucially on how adequately it can be demonstrated that the branched and looped versions *could* have developed out of a single earlier account – as proposed in explanation (b) – given what is known of conditions relating to transmission of the memorized Dharma within the early Sangha. That issue will now be explored.

The simplest form of postulate (b) is that one of the existing versions, either the branched or the looped, has preserved the source form intact, while the other represents a modification of it.[47] Near its beginning, the branched version is specific about the nature of each relationship; it indicates several different types of relationship, namely those represented in Figure 2 (a) by the signs +, ↓, }, =. It is this diversity that defines the branching structure. The looped version, however, recognizes only one type of relationship, expressed in the fixed formula "X-*paccayā* Y" repeated at each linkage, and uniformly represented in Figure 2 (b) by the arrow sign. It is this uniformity that defines its basically linear structure.

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representatives of the two positions are: for the microcosmic, psychological interpretation, BUDDHADASA Bhikkhu: *Paticcasamuppada: Practical Dependent Origination*, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Vuddhidhamma Fund 1992 (e.g. p. 14); and for the macrocosmic, physical interpretation, NYANATILOKA: *Buddhist Dictionary* (Colombo: Frewin 1972), pp. 128-136 (esp. p. 131).

47. The "source form" is not supposed to be the form of the doctrine taught by the Buddha. It is simply the postulated common ancestor of the two existing versions and is, in its turn, subject to possible interpretation as derived from some still earlier form.

In respect of this feature, it is not hard to see how, in the oral transmission of the teaching, the diverse descriptions in the beginning part of the branched version could have developed into the uniform descriptions in the looped version, particularly in situations where the series was being chanted in reverse order. One can postulate broadly the following line of development. The "X-*paccayā* Y" pattern, which applies at each linkage as one moves backward from *jarā-maraṇa* to *jāti*, from *jāti* to *bhava*, and so on, originally applied only as far as *phassa* (as in the present branched version). However, chanting monks, mechanically repeating the memorized formula with little understanding of its purport, mistakenly applied the same pattern to the remaining items, all the way back to the beginning (as in the present looped version). In thus regularizing the wording of the chanted material, the monks responsible unintentionally simplified the structure: the branching arrangement became a simple linear series.

A line of development that could have effected the converse structural change is difficult to envisage. In other words, it is easy to see how the branched version could have yielded the essentially linear structure of the looped version by simple loss and regularization, but it is hard to see how the reverse could have happened. This postulated process of change is, as yet, vague on detail, but it suffices to make the main point: in respect of the issues considered thus far, it is more likely that the looped version developed out of the branched version than that the reverse happened. This recognized, an attempt will now be made to fill in the details.

In Figure 2, the branched version is shown with the six senses combined, in order to reveal its relationship with the looped version; e.g., the item *viññāṇa* (consciousness) in the depiction of the branched version represents the summation of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. Existing textual accounts of the branched version do not explicitly combine the six senses in this way. They say: "Conditioned by the eye and visible forms arises eye consciousness. ... Thus is the arising of suffering." And then they go through the entire series again with each of the five remaining senses. However, given the examples cited earlier where *viññāṇa* and other items are defined in terms of the six senses collectively, it is clearly reasonable to suggest that such a combined account might have formerly existed. Its wording would have followed

the pattern seen in the existing accounts; that is, it would have begun more or less as follows:[48]

    a) *Saḷāyatanaṃ ca paṭicca nāma-rūpaṃ ca uppajjati viññāṇaṃ.* (Conditioned by the sixfold sense-base and name-and-form, arises consciousness.)

    b) *Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso.* (The coming together of the three is contact.)

    c) *Phassa-paccayā vedanā.* (Conditioned by contact is feeling.)

    d) *Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā.* (Conditioned by feeling is craving.)

Now, it is an observable fact that, with one partial exception (discussed below), accounts of the branched version present it only in forward sequence, while accounts of the looped version present it initially in reverse sequence and then in forward sequence. The relationship between the forward and reverse presentations of the looped version (as also of the much better attested standard version) is such that the reverse presentation is obtained from the forward presentation by reversing the sequence of the separate statements while leaving those statements themselves unchanged. For example, where the forward sequence *concludes* thus: "... *Bhava-paccayā jāti. Jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ.*" the reverse sequence *begins* thus: "*Jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ. Bhava-paccayā jāti. ...*"

Let us consider the effect of applying this principle in reversing the postulated combined branched version (in which the six senses are brought together). What is involved can be seen in the following reversed presentation of the above four statements. (**Bold** is used to highlight the items whose relationships are being stated.)

    d) *Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā.* (Conditioned by **feeling** is **craving**.)

    c) *Phassa-paccayā vedanā.* (Conditioned by **contact** is **feeling**.)

    b) *Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso.* (The coming together of the three is **contact**.)

    a) *Saḷāyatanaṃ ca paṭicca nāma-rūpaṃ ca uppajjati viññāṇaṃ.* (Conditioned by the **sixfold sense-base** and **name-and-form**, arises **consciousness**.)

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48. Modeled on the pattern at SN 4:86.13–17 and many other locations.

The progression from statement (d) to statement (c) presents no problem. But to go on from that to statement (b), "The coming together of the three is contact," would make no sense, because "the three" are not named until the following statement (a).

At this point, according to the postulate advanced above, monks reciting the formula responded by mechanically applying the same "X-*paccayā* Y" pattern to the remaining items (shown bold). This yielded a variety of results. Along one line of development, *Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso* was replaced by *Saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso*, using the first of the three items from statement (a); and the series was then completed by continuing similarly with the two remaining items: *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ. Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ.* Along a second line of development, *saḷāyatana* was overlooked, so that *Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso* was replaced by *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā phasso*, followed by *Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ.* In both cases, further uncertainty arose from an awareness that the new final statement contradicted the imperfectly remembered source version, according to which *nāma-rūpa* was a condition for *viññāṇa*, rather than the reverse. This situation was covered by adding, usually but not always, one further statement: *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā viññāṇaṃ.* The result was the looped version, with or without *saḷāyatana*.

The looped version is attested in sutra collections representing both the Pali tradition (SN, DN) and the Sarvāstivāda (SA).[49] Consequently, the developments hypothetically outlined above probably must be supposed to have occurred before the sectarian split that yielded those two traditions, i.e. well before the Pali tradition's Third Council in the third century B.C.[50]

The proposed reconstruction supposes that, at the time of the transformation, there existed a variant of the branched version in which the six senses were combined to yield a single series. Implied is that this variant employed *nāma-rūpa* as a collective term for all six classes of sense object. This is an important point because, whereas the terms for the six individual sense objects are likely to have been well understood

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49. The continuing doubts about whether SA (T#99) really is Sarvāstivādin have little effect on the argument, and will not be discussed here. The same applies for subsequent statements relating to the sectarian affinities of other Chinese āgama texts.

50. Borrowing from one school to another after their separation cannot be ruled out, making a later date also possible.

by any Sangha member, the more technical term *nāma-rūpa* appears (from the conflicting definitions of it) to have been a source of some confusion since early times. Such confusion would have facilitated modification of the causal relationships involving *nāma-rūpa*. For example, the obscure "Conditioned by consciousness is name-and-form" could have enjoyed a plausibility not shared by the transparent and counterintuitive "Conditioned by eye-consciousness are visible forms."

The proposed reconstruction also implies that the practice of reciting the causal series in reverse order was an innovation, and indeed that this new practice was the immediate cause of the distortions. It was earlier noted in passing that there does exist one partial exception to the generalization that the branched version is found only in the forward sequence. This exception occurs in one of the four Chinese counterparts of the Pali Mahānidāna-sutta, namely that contained in DA (the full Chinese translation of Dīrghāgama). It will be recalled that the Pali account describes, initially in reverse sequence, the looped version without the sixfold sense-base (*saḷāyatana*). The relevant DA account begins by doing the same; but, having traced the series back to the link between contact and feeling, it digresses, as follows: [51]

> The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Conditioned by contact is feeling. What is the meaning of this? Ānanda, if there were no eye, no visible form, and no eye consciousness, would there be contact?"
>
> He answered: "There would not."
>
> "If there were no ear, sound, and ear consciousness, ... no mind, mind object, and mind consciousness, would there be contact?"
>
> He answered: "There would not."
>
> "Ānanda if all beings lacked contact, would there be feeling?"
>
> He answered: "There would not."

There follow explanations of the link between name-and-form and contact (corresponding to REAT's quote from the Pali), and of the reciprocal link between consciousness and name-and-form.

The quoted section begins with a question about how feeling (*vedanā*) is conditioned by contact (*phassa*). Incongruously, however, the answer given deals mainly with how contact is dependent on the coming together of each sense organ with its corresponding object and consciousness. In effect, the looped version is here combined with a portion

51. DA 61a25-b1.

of the branched version. While the overall causal sequence is stated in reverse, the components of each sense triad from the branched version are named in the original forward sequence (eye, visual form, eye consciousness; etc.). After this digression into the branched version, the account of the looped version resumes: contact is conditioned by name-and-form, and so on back to consciousness and again name-and-form.

It is generally accepted that the Chinese DA represents the Dharmaguptaka school, whose divergence from the Pali tradition probably happened well after that of the Sarvāstivāda.[52] This unique variant of the looped version is, therefore, probably too late historically to be interpreted as a transitional form between the branched and looped versions. It appears, rather, to represent a combining of the branched version with its already well established looped derivative, perhaps in an attempt to reconcile two different memorized versions of the Mahānidāna known within the Dharmaguptaka tradition.

The hypothetical reconstruction set out above demonstrates that the existing looped version, together with its several variants, can be explained as a distorted derivative of a form of the branched version in which the six senses were combined. It thereby demonstrates that the differences between the existing branched and looped versions can be accounted for in terms of processes of change that could well have happened in the course of the early oral transmission of the teaching. Further implications of this finding will be suggested in the course of examining the two remaining versions of the PS formula identified here for study.

The standard version and the Sutta-nipāta version

The version of the PS formula preserved in the Sutta-nipāta agrees with the standard version in tracing the causal series back beyond *viññāṇa* (consciousness) to *saṅkhārā* (activities) and *avijjā* (ignorance). It differs from the standard version in omitting *nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form) and *saḷāyatana* (sixfold sense-base), and adding extra items at the beginning and end of the series:

52. See Ernst WALDSCHMIDT: "Central Asian Sūtra Fragments," in Heinz BECHERT (ed.), *The Language of the Earliest Buddhist Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1980): 136-164, p. 136.

Standard	Sutta-nipāta
	upadhi
avijjā	avijjā
saṅkhārā	saṅkhārā
viññāṇa	viññāṇa
nāma-rūpa	
saḷāyatana	
phassa	phassa
vedanā	vedanā
taṇhā	taṇhā
upādāna	upādāna
bhava	bhava
jāti	jāti
jarā-maraṇa	jarā-maraṇa
	ārambhā
	āhārā
	iñjitā

The extra items in the Sn version are not attested in any other account of the PS series. They are, therefore, likely to be relatively late additions, especially given that several further items are mentioned as following *iñjitā* (movements) without being made part of the series proper.[53] No attempt will be made here to interpret these extra items in the Sn version. In the following discussion they will be passed over, leaving a series that differs from the standard version only in omitting *nāma-rūpa* and *saḷāyatana*.

In deriving *viññāṇa* from *saṅkhārā* (activities) and *avijjā* (ignorance), both of these versions differ substantially from the branched version, as shown in Figure 3. However, the standard version, including as it does *nāma-rūpa* and *saḷāyatana*, differs less markedly from the looped version, being identical with it from *viññāṇa* to the end. Consequently,

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53. The linguistically conservative character of Sn does not rule out the possibility that its contents underwent development over time. There is evidence that the initial *upadhi* (also given as *upadhī*) may represent a repetition of *upādāna*; cf. SN 2: 107.28-108.25 = SA 82b9-14 = Tp 124-6, where *upadhi* replaces *upādāna*. The set of extra items in Sn is roughly matched in the Mahānidāna by a subsidiary series of items (*pariyesanā*, *lābha*, etc.) said to be conditioned by *taṇhā*: DN 2: 58.31-59.3 = DA 60c19-22 = DA' 242b18-23 = MA 579a1-6 = MA' 844c16-23.

the problems considered earlier when the branched version was compared with the looped version present themselves again, in much the same form, when the branched version is compared with the standard version. It is clear that much the same response to those problems is applicable here. That is, one can reason along the same lines that the existing arrangement of the standard version, in which *nāma-rūpa* and *saḷāyatana* follow *viññāṇa* in linear series, is likely to have developed out of an earlier arrangement in which they preceded *viññāṇa*, as in the branched version. The absence of a loop in the present case simplifies the argument slightly. The presence, in the standard version, of an extra sub-chain (*avijjā* → *saṅkhārā* →) feeding into *viññāṇa* does not affect the argument; this sub-chain simply accompanies *viññāṇa* throughout the postulated changes. Consequently, application of the earlier reasoning to the present case points to hypothetical derivation of the existing standard version from an earlier form that differed from the branched version only in having the extra sub-chain. That earlier form is shown in Figure 4.

In this postulated earlier form of the standard version the arising of *viññāṇa* is traced to two different sources: on one hand to the sense organs and their objects (*saḷāyatana* and *nāma-rūpa*), and on the other hand to activities (*saṅkhārā*), which in their turn are conditioned by ignorance (*avijjā*). The branched version represents the former source, and the Sn version is now seen to represent the other source (activities and ignorance).

This yields the following simple picture of how the different versions of the PS formula relate to one another: the branched version derives *viññāṇa* from the sense organs and sense objects; the Sn version derives *viññāṇa* from activities and ignorance; and the ancestor of the standard version derived it from both sources. The ancestor of the standard version was, in effect, a combination of the branched version and the Sn version. To describe it from another perspective, the branched version fails to mention one of the two sources of *viññāṇa* recognized in the ancestral standard version, while the Sn version fails to mention the other; each omits one of the two branches leading to *viññāṇa*. The Sn version's omission of *nāma-rūpa* and *saḷāyatana*, appearing as a gap in the linear series, is thereby explained as simply a by-passing of one of the two main branches. Also explained is the statement, associated with the looped version, that the causal series cannot be traced further back than *nāma-rūpa* – this despite the existence (sometimes in the very same sutra) of the standard version, in which the series does appear to go

further back. As Figure 4 portrays it, *nāma-rūpa* is indeed as far as the causal series can be traced *along the branch in question*. The statement that no further cause can be found beyond *nāma-rūpa* is not, after all, incompatible with the status of *avijjā* as the beginning of the (standard) series, since *nāma-rūpa* and *avijjā* are the tips of two different branches. The structure represented in Figure 4 thereby resolves some otherwise puzzling contradictions in the textual accounts. It has considerable explanatory power.

As regards supporting data, the explanation just advanced for the development of the standard version differs in one important respect from that advanced earlier for the development of the looped version. Whereas the proposed ancestor of the looped version still exists (as the branched version), the proposed ancestor of the standard version is nowhere attested as such; we do not find in the Nikāyas/Āgamas explicit descriptions of the structure depicted in Figure 4. However, there does exist some less direct textual evidence for this structure. It is to be found within the earliest stratum of the Abhidharma literature, the Suttanta-bhājanīya portion of the Pali Vibhaṅga and its counterparts in the Śāriputra Abhidharma (Dharmaguptaka) and the Dharmaskandha (Sarvāstivāda).[54]

In its section on the PS doctrine the Vibhaṅga begins by presenting the standard version. It then explains the twelve items by reproducing verbatim the definitions from the Pali sutras cited near the beginning of this article (SN and MN) – but with one exception: for *nāma* the Vibhaṅga gives a different definition again, equating it with just three of the four non-physical aggregates (*khandha*), namely feeling, perception,

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54. Consisting largely of nearly verbatim quotes from the Nikāyas/Āgamas, and having evidently been put together before the first sectarian split in the Sthavira tradition, this textual corpus rates as hardly less reliable than the Nikāyas/Āgamas themselves in representing early Buddhism. Besides Chinese versions of the Śāriputra Abhidharma and Dharmaskandha, we have a Sanskrit manuscript from Gilgit containing the section of the Dharmaskandha that deals with PS. Śāriputra Abhidharma at T28:525-719#1548; Dharmaskandha at T26:453-514#1537, and (PS section only) DIETZ (1984; see note 31, above). On these texts, see Erich FRAUWALLNER: *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems* (trans. Sophie Francis KIDD) (1995: Albany, State University of New York Press), pp. 15-21, 43-48, 97-116; also pp. 20 & 39, where their common origin is postulated.

and activities (*vedanā, saññā,* and *saṅkhārā*).[55] The Śāriputra Abhi-
dharma does the same, except that it agrees with the Pali sutras in
defining *nāma* as comprising feeling, perception, volition, contact, and
mind-work (*vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phassa, manasikāra*).[56]

The Dharmaskandha, the third of our early Abhidharma sources, is
exceptional as regards treatment of PS. It presents what amounts to the
standard version with two additional causal connections inserted, namely
those marked with * in the following representation (the significance of
¶ will be explained shortly).[57]

	avijjā	→	*saṅkhārā*
¶	*saṅkhārā*	→	*viññāna*
	viññāna	→	*nāma-rūpa*
¶	*nāma-rūpa*	→	*viññāna**
	nāma-rūpa	→	*saḷāyatana*
¶	*nāma-rūpa*	→	*phassa**
¶	*saḷāyatana*	→	*phassa*
¶	*phassa*	→	*vedanā*
¶	*vedanā*	→	*taṇhā*
	taṇhā	→	*upādāna*
	etc.		

Of the two additional causal connections the first, *nāma-rūpa →
viññāna,* is familiar as the extra link responsible for the loop of the
looped version; the second, *nāma-rūpa → phassa,* is as in the Mahā-
nidāna account of the looped version, which omits *saḷāyatana*.[58] The
inclusion of these two additional links was, therefore, probably intended
to make the Dharmaskandha account cover both variants of the looped
version as well as the standard version. (The Sn version appears not to
be attested in the Sarvāstivādin corpus.)

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55. Vibh 135-138; *nāma-rūpa* defined at 136.7-9; probable sources of sutra quotes
    suggested on p. 437. Perhaps it was felt that *viññāna,* the one remaining non-
    physical aggregate, ought to be omitted because it had already been named as the
    condition for the arising of *nāma-rūpa.* Buddhaghosa gives the same definition at
    Vism 558.
56. T28: 606a-612b; definition of *nāma-rūpa* at 608b9-10.
57. T26: 505a-513c = DIETZ 24-70; extra links at 507c25-, 509a10- = DIETZ 35-,
    40-.
58. At MA 579c4-7. MA is thought to be Sarvāstivādin.

Whereas the Vibhaṅga and the Śāriputra Abhidharma explain each of the links by quoting the brief sutra definition of the relevant item, the Dharmaskandha explicates in some detail by quoting lengthier sutra passages. For six of the causal connections, namely those marked with ¶ in the above list, the passages quoted are drawn from the sutra account of the branched version: "Conditioned by eye and visible forms arises eye-consciousness. The coming together of the three is contact. Conditioned by contact is feeling. ..."[59] On each occasion the quote covers all six sense fields and continues as far as is appropriate for the point reached in the series. For example, in those cases where the second item in the causal connection is contact (*phassa*), the quote goes as far as contact.

The Dharmaskandha's application of the branched version in explaining the standard and looped versions provides general support for the essentially similar approach adopted in the present analysis. More specific support can be found in the pattern of that application, in particular the Dharmaskandha's conspicuous failure to use the branched version in explaining *viññāṇa → nāma-rūpa* and *nāma-rūpa → saḷāyatana*. This correlates with the claim implicitly made here that these two links in the standard version are doctrinally suspect, that they are artifacts generated as the earlier structure (Figure 4) was mechanically converted into a linear series.[60] Thus, the Dharmaskandha's treatment of PS not only resembles the present analysis in interpreting the standard version in terms of the branched version; it also supports some specific aspects of the interpretation advanced here.

The above observations indicate that in the period when the relevant portion of the Dharmaskandha was being compiled, knowledge of the standard version coexisted with a residual memory of the branching structure from which it was derived. For the present this is as close as we can get to finding direct textual evidence of the inferred ancestor of the existing standard version, portrayed in Figure 4.

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59. Quotes from branched version begin at T26: 507a4, c25, 509a10, b26, c14, 510a13 = DIETZ 31, 35, 40, 43, 44, 46. Pali parallels for quoted passages are indicated in DIETZ's footnotes.

60. This application of the branched version in explaining the standard version extends only as far as *taṇhā*; and the classification of items in the branched version in terms of the six sense fields also extends only as far as *taṇhā* (cf. note 27, above). What principle may underlie this correlation is not immediately apparent.

Semantic issues

It remains to consider two outstanding questions relating to the meanings of terms: why *nāma-rūpa*, here interpreted as denoting the six classes of sense object, is defined in the texts as meaning, in effect, "mind-and-body"; and why *viññāna* is defined in the texts sometimes as the six classes of sense consciousness (the meaning adopted in the present analysis) and sometimes as rebirth consciousness. It is noteworthy that *nāma-rūpa* and *viññāna* are two of the three items identified here as involved in the rearrangement whereby the originally branching structure became a linear series. (The third is *saḷāyatana*, which could hardly be interpreted as anything other than the six sense organs.) Regarding the possibility of a causal link between the semantic ambiguity and the structural rearrangement, the following considerations are relevant.

The branched version in its combined form would have begun thus: "Conditioned by the sixfold sense-base (*saḷāyatana*) and the six sense objects (*nāma-rūpa*) arises consciousness (*viññāna*)." Applying these meanings of the terms to the derivative looped version would have yielded the following understanding of its first three statements: "Conditioned by the six sense objects is consciousness. Conditioned by consciousness are the six sense objects. Conditioned by the six sense objects is the sixfold sense-base (*or* contact, in the Mahānidāna)." If these meanings of the terms were known to Sangha members at the time, some of the statements would have seemed to contradict common sense. (How could consciousness be the condition for external sense objects? How could sense objects be the condition for the sense organs?) If, however, the signification of *nāma-rūpa* – literally, and misleadingly, "name-and-form" – had already been forgotten, then these incongruities would not have been apparent, thus facilitating the rearrangement, as suggested earlier.

In either case the natural response would have been to give the troublesome terms meanings that would make the new causal series intelligible. Since the end of the series explicitly related to the process of rebirth in *saṃsāra*, it was natural to interpret its beginning in the same terms. Accordingly, *viññāna* in this context became the consciousness that descends into the mother's womb at conception, while *nāma-rūpa* became the mind-body complex that then takes shape and, after developing sense organs (*saḷāyatana*), experiences contact (*phassa*) and so on. With the terms reinterpreted in this way, the beginning of the rearranged series would have acquired a seeming coherence and relevance.

This discussion has centered on the term *nāma-rūpa* and the confusion it appears to have generated. One is led to ask why the Buddha would have chosen to denote the totality of sense objects by a word that literally meant "name-and-form," thus creating a terminology that was inherently susceptible to misinterpretation.[61] The answer may lie in REAT's observation that the *nāma-rūpa* of early Buddhism was close in meaning to the *nāma-rūpa* of the pre-Buddhist Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣadic *nāma-rūpa* figures in an account of the manifestation of the universe.[62] Perhaps the Buddha appropriated and adapted this important term precisely so that his teaching of Conditioned Arising would be recognized as a response to the doctrines of his opponents.[63]

Conclusions

This examination of four versions of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* doctrine has demonstrated that two of the four, those referred to here as the branched and looped versions, show evidence of being derived from a single earlier form. One can readily propose a viable hypothetical reconstruction of the process whereby the looped version could have developed out of the branched version – more precisely, out of a variant of the branched version in which the six senses were combined. Crucial to that reconstruction is the proposition (already advanced by YINSHUN and REAT, and hinted at by WATSUJI) that *nāma-rūpa* was formerly understood as denoting the totality of sense objects.

It has also been shown that application of this finding to the standard twelve-membered version of the doctrine points to derivation of the well-known linear series from an earlier structure that was even more elaborately branching than the "branched version." This further finding incidentally provides a simple explanation for the differences among the

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61. This terminology also had the disadvantage of not conforming to the usual order of listing the sense objects: elsewhere the convention was to list material objects (*rūpa*) before mental objects (*nāma*), as in the branched version of PS.

62. Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad 1.4.7; cf. REAT, p. 18.

63. Cf. GOMBRICH's portrayal of the Buddha as consistently implementing such a strategy, e.g. as identifying a Buddhist counterpart for the "threefold knowledge" of the Brahmins. Richard F. GOMBRICH: *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (= SOAS Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion XVII) (London: Athlone 1996), pp. 29-30.

versions examined here: it shows the standard version as a combination of the Sutta-nipāta version and the branched version. The analysis has also identified, as an important element in the process of transformation, a scholastic reinterpretation of the doctrinal import of the early part of the causal series, entailing redefinition of *nāma-rūpa*, and of *viññāṇa* as well in the case of the looped version.

Consideration of relevant historical landmarks indicates that the inferred modifications of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* formula may have already been completed before the Pali tradition's Third Council. However, because doctrinal borrowing between traditions cannot be ruled out, it is also possible that the changes date from a later period, though certainly from a time when preservation of the canon still depended on oral transmission. In any case, the evidence points to a remarkably early and drastic hiatus in the transmission of this highly esteemed piece of Buddhist doctrine.

Figure 1. Correspondences in content between branched and looped versions:

Branched version	Looped version
	nāma-rūpa (name-and-form)
6 sense organs	*viññāṇa* (consciousness)
6 sense objects	*nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form)
6 consciousnesses	[*saḷāyatana* (sixfold sense-base)]
phassa	*phassa*
vedanā	*vedanā* (feeling)
etc.	etc.

Figure 2. Contrast in structure between branched and looped versions:

(a) Branched version   (b) Looped version
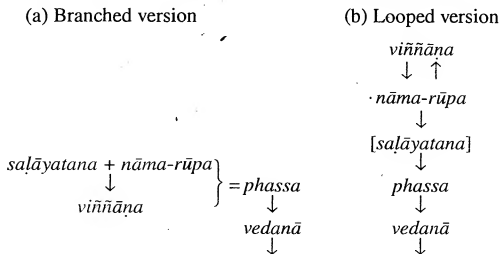
Figure 3. Derivation of *viññāṇa* in different versions:

(a) Branched version: *saḷāyatana + nāma-rūpa*
                                                        ↓
                                               viññāṇa

(b) Standard & Sn versions: *avijjā → saṅkhārā → viññāṇa*

Figure 4. Inferred structure of ancestor of standard version:

$$\left.\begin{array}{c} saḷāyatana + nāma\text{-}rūpa \\ \downarrow \\ avijjā \rightarrow saṅkhārā \rightarrow viññāṇa \end{array}\right\} = phassa \\ \downarrow \\ vedanā \\ \downarrow$$

Dear Michael,

I received the article yesterday and read it quickly last night. Thank you
for sending it. I did not pause at each step of Dr. Bucknell's argument but
hurried on to see the main points in his interpretation. I have to say that I
found it clever, but so loaded with questionable hypotheses that I do not see
much support for his conclusions (even though he frequently uses the
expression "this demonstrates that ....").

His whole interpretation rests on the assumption that the expression
"bahiddhaa naamaruupa" conveys the original (or archaic) sense of
naamaruupa, and that the current interpretation (based on the identification
of NR with the psycho-physical organism) stems from a later definition of
the terms concocted by monks. I admit that the expression "bahiddhaa
naamaruupa" has intriguing implications, suggesting a wider meaning to the
term than is normally assigned to it. However, the expression occurs in only
one Pali sutta (SN 12:19), and the qualification "external" implies that this is
a special usage departing from the common one. Many more suttas speak of
NR in terms suggesting that NR is in some way implicated in the rebirth
process. It is spoken of as undergoing "descent" (avakkanti). In some
passages vinnana is said to condition 'punabbhavabhinibbatti', which in turn
conditions the six sense bases (see SN 12:12). This suggests that
naamaruupa and the latter are functionally equivalent. Thus there is just too
much counter-evidence against the view that naama-ruupa was originally a
code term for the six sense objects. Since so much of Bucknell's argument
rests on this assumption, when it is queried, his argument totters. There were
other claims of his that I would challenge. But most seriously, this kind of
academic approach to the Dhamma raises the question: "Are we to believe
the Buddhist tradition itself in its understanding of basic Buddhist doctrines,
or should we instead believe innovative scholars out to score points by
devising their own interpretations?" I don't want to recommend blind
adherence to tradition. But when one departs from it too widely, one risks
finding oneself wandering in the maze of intellectual argumentation, without
a base of practical experience e to serve as one's support.

With metta, Bhikkhu Bodhi

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ÑĀṆAVĪRA THERA'S
'A NOTE ON PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA'

Part One

Bhikkhu Bodhi

Introduction

1. Ñāṇavīra Thera's *Notes on Dhamma* was first published in 1963, during the author's lifetime, in a small cyclostyled edition distributed to a select list of recipients. During the following two years the author made a number of corrections and substantial additions to his original text, leaving behind at his death an enlarged typescript entitled *Notes on Dhamma (1960-1965)*. For twenty-two years this version circulated from hand to hand among a small circle of readers in the form of typed copies, photocopies and handwritten manuscripts. Only in 1987 did *Notes on Dhamma* appear in print, when it was issued along with a collection of the author's letters under the title *Clearing the Path: Writings of Ñāṇavīra Thera (1960-1965)*[1].

Even this edition, a print run of 1,000 copies, turned out to be ephemeral. Barely nine months after the book was released, the editor-publisher (who had invested at least five years preparing the material for publication) died under tragic circumstances. Path Press effectively closed down and the question whether the book will ever be reprinted still hangs in the air. But in spite of its limited availability, *Clearing the Path* has had an impact on its readers that has been nothing short of electric. Promoted solely by word of mouth, the book has spawned an international network of admirers — a Theravāda Buddhist underground — united in their conviction that *Notes on Dhamma* is the sole key to unlock the inner meaning of the Buddha's

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1   Path Press, Colombo 1987.

Teaching. Some of its admirers have called it the most important book written in this century, others have hailed it as the most outstanding work on the Dhamma to appear since the Nikāyas were first written down on palm leaves at the Aluvihāra. For the book's enthusiasts no effort is too much in struggling through its dense pages of tightly compressed arguments and copious Pāli quotations in order to fulfil its author's invitation 'to come and share his point of view'.

Ñāṇavīra's purpose in writing the *Notes* was, in his own words, 'to indicate the proper interpretation of the Suttas', the key to which he believed he had discovered through an experience that he identified as the arising of the Eye of Dhamma (*dhamma-cakkhu*), that is, the attainment of stream-entry[2]. His proposition sounds innocuous enough as it stands, until one discovers that the author sees this task as entailing nothing less than a radical re-valuation of the entire Theravāda exegetical tradition. Few of the standard interpretative principles upheld by Theravāda orthodoxy are spared the slashing of his pen. The most time-honoured explanatory tools for interpreting the Suttas, along with the venerated books from which they stem, he dismisses as 'a mass of dead matter choking the Suttas'. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the Milindapañha, the Visuddhimagga, the Pāli Commentaries — all come in for criticism, and the author says that ignorance of them 'may be counted as a positive advantage as leaving less to be un-learned'[3].

2. Strangely, although *Notes on Dhamma* makes such a sharp frontal attack on Theravāda orthodoxy, to date no proponent of the mainstream Theravāda tradition has risen to the occasion and attempted to counter its arguments. The few traditionalists who have read the book have either disregarded it entirely or merely branded it as a thicket of errors. But to my knowledge none has tried to point out exactly what these errors are and to meet its criticisms with reasoned argumentation based directly on the texts.

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2   See *Clearing the Path*, pp.153, 495.
3   *Ibid.*, p.5.

The present essay is an attempt to fill that gap. I will be concerned here with only one note in Ñāṇavīra's collection, his 'A Note on Paṭiccasamuppāda'. This note, however, is the main pillar of Ñāṇavīra's distinctive approach to the Suttas; it is the first and longest note in the book and the most consistently radical. The Note sounds a bold challenge to the prevailing 'three-life interpretation' of the twelve-factored formula of dependent arising. The traditional interpretation of this formula, expounded in full detail in the Visuddhimagga (Chapter XVII), has guided followers of mainstream Theravāda Buddhism for centuries in their understanding of this most profound and difficult principle of the Dhamma. Hence a criticism of it that claims to be validated by the Suttas themselves strikes from within at the very core of the orthodox Theravāda commentarial tradition.

At the beginning of his Note, Ñāṇavīra states that he assumes his reader is acquainted with this traditional interpretation and is dissatisfied with it (§2). Such dissatisfaction, he asserts, is not unjustified, and he proposes to provide in its place what he modestly claims 'may perhaps be found to be a more satisfactory approach'. I too will assume that the reader is already acquainted with the three-life interpretation, and hence I will not recapitulate that interpretation here. While the reader who has personal access to Ñāṇavīra's Note and can refer to it in the course of this discussion may be able to follow my arguments here more easily, for the benefit of readers who are not so situated I will recount below those contentions of his with which I take issue.

3. My purpose in writing this examination is to vindicate the traditional three-life interpretation against Ñāṇavīra's critique of it. I propose to show that the approach which he considers to be 'more satisfactory' not only cannot be justified by reference to the discourses of the Buddha, but is in fact contradicted by them. I also intend to establish that, contrary to Ñāṇavīra's allegations, the three-life interpretation, though not explicitly stated in such terms, is fully in accord with the Buddha's teachings. In my view, this interpretation, far from deviating from the Suttas, simply makes explicit the Buddha's intention in expounding dependent arising.

In making this assertion, I am not saying that the detailed ex-
position of *paṭiccasamuppāda* (PS) as found in the Pāli Com-
mentaries can in all particulars be traced back to the Suttas. The
aim of the Commentaries, in their treatment of PS, is to correlate
the Suttanta teaching of PS with the systematic analysis of pheno-
mena and their conditional relations as found in the Abhi-
dhamma. This results in an explanation of PS that is far more
complex and technical than anything that can be drawn out from
the Sutta texts themselves. I do not think that acceptance of the
basic dynamics of the 'three-life' approach entails acceptance of
the details of the commentarial explanation, and I also believe
that the Commentaries take unnecessary risks when they try to
read back into the Suttas ideas deriving from tools of inter-
pretation that appeared perhaps centuries after the Suttas were
compiled. All that I wish to maintain is that the essential vision
underlying the commentarial interpretation is correct: namely,
that the twelvefold formula of PS extends over three lives and as
such describes the generative structure of Saṁsāra, the round of
repeated births[4].

Like Ñāṇavīra, I take as the sole ultimate authority for
interpretation of the Dhamma the Buddha's discourses as found in
the four main Nikāyas and in the older strata of the Khuddaka
Nikāya. I share with him the view that these books can be con-
sidered the most trustworthy record of the Buddha's teaching, and
hence should be turned to as the final court of appeal in re-
solving questions about the correct interpretation of the Dhamma.

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4   In this paper I will not be concerned at all with the Vibhaṅga's Abhi-
dhamma Bhājanīya (Chapter VI), which applies the 12 factors of PS to each
single mind–moment (*citta*) in the Abhidhamma analysis of consciousness.
Although here all 12 factors are shown to be operative at a single moment, this
treatment of the doctrine is **not** put forward as an interpretation of the PS for-
mula intended in the Suttas, as is clear from the distinction the Vibhaṅga itself
makes between the Suttanta method and the Abhidhamma method. In its treat-
ment of PS by the Suttanta method, the Vibhaṅga confirms the three–life
approach.

Unlike Ñāṇavīra, however, I do not hold that all later works, such as the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the Commentaries, should be rejected point blank as miasmas of error and decay. We must certainly accept the findings of scientific scholarship regarding the dating of the canonical and post-canonical texts, and should recognise that Theravāda doctrine has evolved in several strata through the Abhidhamma, the Commentaries and the later exegetical works. In my view, however, this does not mean that every text that was composed after the age of the Nikāyas must be regarded with distrust or disdain.

Fundamental Attitudes

4. Before I turn to examine certain specific points in Ñāṇavīra's Note I wish to focus on one discomfiting consequence entailed by his insistence that his view of PS is exclusively and absolutely correct. The three-life interpretation of PS has been maintained by the Theravāda tradition virtually from the time that tradition emerged as a distinct school. It goes back long before the time of Buddhaghosa's commentaries and can be found already in near-definitive form in the Vibhaṅga of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the Paṭisambhidāmagga of the Sutta Piṭaka, works dating from around the third century BCE. Further, this interpretation, in its essential outlines, is by no means peculiar to the Theravāda school. It was also shared, with minor differences in details, by the early rivals of the Theravāda, the Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṅghika, which suggests that at least in outline this way of explaining PS already preceded the first schisms. The same three-life division can be found in the works of the great Mādhyamika philosopher Nāgārjuna (e.g., in his Mūlamādhyamikakārikā, Chapter 26), and is also held in the present day by the Mahāyāna schools that have inherited the exegetical methodology of ancient Indian Buddhism[5]. In contrast, Ñāṇavīra's view of PS, as pertaining

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5   Thus the so-called Tibetan Wheel of Life, which probably stems from the old Indian Sarvāstivāda, expressly coordinates a pictorial representation of the 12 factors with a picture of the different planes of rebirth.

solely to a single life, appears to be without precedent in the tenet systems of early Buddhism. Thus, when Ñāṇavira holds that he has correctly grasped the Buddha's intention in expounding PS, this implicitly commits him to the thesis that the entire mainstream Buddhist philosophical tradition has utterly mis-interpreted this most fundamental Buddhist doctrine, and had already done so within two centuries after the Master's demise. While it is not altogether impossible that this occurred, it would seem a lapse of astonishing magnitude on the part of the early Buddhist community.

5. Of course, the above argument is not in itself compelling, for one might still be prepared to stand behind Ñāṇavira's claim no matter how audacious it may be. So let us now turn to the Note itself and examine his views on PS. For the present we will pass over his opening salvos against the three-life interpretation. Instead, let us move directly into the sections of the Note in which he reveals his own 'more satisfactory approach'. We will return to the criticisms later and see if they truly require us to abandon the traditional understanding of the doctrine.

Ñāṇavira maintains that PS, in its twelve-factored formu-lation, applies solely and entirely to our existential situation in this present life, without any reference to temporal divisions. It is, in his view, an ever-present existential structure of the unenligh-tened mind describing the mode of being of the 'uninstructed common person' (*assutavā puthujjana*). Ñāṇavira insists that this interpretation of PS alone offers us a way to resolve the im-mediate problem of existence in the present itself: 'It is a matter of one's fundamental attitude to one's own existence — is there, or is there not, a *present* problem, or rather, *anxiety* that can only be resolved *in the present*?' (§7).

I fully agree with Ñāṇavira that our interpretation of PS must flow from our 'fundamental attitude to (our) own existence'. It is also clear from the Suttas that the Buddha's motive in teach-ing PS is to lead us to a present solution of the existential problem of suffering. Repeatedly in the Suttas we see the Buddha teaching PS in order to lay bare the structure of conditions that underlies the or: :ination and cessation of *dukkha*. However, in

order to understand how PS fulfils this function, we should focus on the question: What is the meaning of the *dukkha* that the Buddha's Teaching is designed to liberate us from? Ñāṇavīra contends that this *dukkha* is the anxiety and stress that pervade our present existence, and hence he interprets all the terms of the standard PS formula in a way that lends support to this contention. However, if we read the Suttas on their own terms, in their totality, we find that Ñāṇavīra's understanding of *dukkha* falls far short of the vision of the First Noble Truth that the Buddha wishes to impart to us. Of course, *dukkha* does include 'existential anxiety', and there are several suttas which define the conditions for the arising and removal of such *dukkha*[6]. An unbiased and complete survey of the Nikāyas, however, would reveal that the problem of *dukkha* to which the Buddha's Teaching is addressed is not primarily existential anxiety, nor even the distorted sense of self of which such anxiety may be symptomatic. The primary problem of *dukkha* with which the Buddha is concerned, in its most comprehensive and fundamental dimensions, is the problem of our bondage to Saṁsāra — the round of repeated birth, ageing and death. And, as I will show presently, these terms are intended quite literally as signifying biological birth, ageing and death, *not* our anxiety over being born, growing old and dying.

A glance at the Suttas would suffice to reveal to us the 'fundamental attitudes' that motivated the Buddha and the early disciples in their own quest for deliverance. We find, for example, that each Bodhisatta, from Vipassī to Gotama, seeks the path to enlightenment with the thought, 'Alas, this world has fallen into trouble, in that *it is born and ages and dies and passes away and is reborn*, and it does not know the escape from this suffering of ageing and death'[7]. When young seekers go forth into homelessness out of faith in the Buddha, they do so because they

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[6] I have in mind particularly M 138 and S II 15–19. These show how *pari-assanā*, which might be rendered 'anxiety', arises from clinging (*upādāna*) and ceases with the removal of clinging.

[7] S II 5–11.

have realised: 'I am immersed in birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair; I am immersed in suffering, afflicted with suffering. Perhaps one can discern here an end-making to this entire mass of suffering'[8]. Again and again the Buddha stresses the misery of repeated existence within Saṁsāra, again and again he underscores the urgency of escaping from it (see e.g., S II 178-93). And his constant injunction to the monks throughout his ministry was to dwell diligently so that *'having abandoned the wandering on in births*, you will make an end of suffering' (*pahāya jātisaṁsāraṁ dukkhass' antaṁ karissati*)[9]. These words should leave no doubt that by putting an end to suffering the Buddha means — not release from existential anxiety — but release from the round of rebirths. Insofar as the Dhamma addresses the problem of our present suffering, it does so by situating that suffering in its larger context, our condition of saṁsāric bondage. The present cannot be considered only in its vertical depths. It must also be viewed as the intersection of the past and future, shaped by our past experience and harbouring our future destiny in its womb.

If the Dhamma is to enable us to extricate ourselves from the *dukkha* of repeated birth and death, it must make known the chain of causes that holds us in bondage to this round of repeated birth and death, and it must also indicate what must be done to bring this cycle to a halt. Throughout the Suttas we can find only one basic statement of the causal structure of Saṁsāra, one over-arching formulation with many minor variations, and that is the twelvefold formula of dependent arising. If one's aim in following the Dhamma is to gain release from existential anxiety, then the three-life interpretation of PS may seem unsatisfactory and one may turn to Ñāṇavīra's version as more adequate. But the task which the Buddha sets before his disciples is of a different nature: namely, to gain liberation from the recurrent cycle of birth, old age and death, that is, from bondage to Saṁsāra. Once one

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8   M I 192, 460, 463, etc.
9   D II 121.

accepts this task as one's own, one will see that PS must be looked upon as a disclosure of the conditioned structure of Saṃsāra, showing us how our ignorance, craving and volitional activity keep us chained to the round of existence and drive us from one life to the next.

Birth, Ageing and Death

6. I now intend to take up for scrutiny what might be regarded as the two planks of Ñāṇavīra's interpretation. The two planks to which I refer are his attempts to explain the relationships between those conditions which, in the traditional interpretation, are held to extend over different lifetimes. These are: (i) the nexus of *bhava*, *jāti* and *jarāmaraṇa* — becoming ('being', in Ñāṇavīra's translation), birth, and ageing-and-death; and (ii) the nexus of *avijjā*, *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa* — ignorance, formations ('determinations') and consciousness. I will show that Ñāṇavīra's explanations of both these groups of factors fail to draw support from the source that he himself regards as the supreme authority in the interpretation of the Dhamma, namely, the Pāli Suttas. I will also show that, *contra* Ñāṇavīra, on both points the Suttas confirm the traditional interpretation, which regards these connections as involving a succession of lives.

7. Let us first turn to Ñāṇavīra's treatment of the former nexus (§10 of his Note):

> The fundamental *upādāna* or 'holding' is *attavāda*, which is holding to a belief in 'self'. The *puthujjana* takes what appears to be his 'self' at its face value; and so long as this goes on he continues to *be* a 'self', at least in his own eyes (and in those of others like him). This is *bhava* or 'being'. The *puthujjana* knows that people are born and die; and since he thinks 'my self exists' so he also thinks 'my self was born' and 'my self will die'. The *puthujjana* sees a 'self' to whom the words *birth* and *death* apply.

Before we go any further, we should point out that Ñāṇavīra does not cite any suttas to support his understanding of *bhava*, *jāti* and *jarāmaraṇa*, and in fact there are no suttas to be found in

the Pāli Canon that explain the above terms in this way[10]. Moreover, on Ñāṇavīra's interpretation it may not even be quite correct to say '*jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ*'. On his view, it seems, one would be obliged to say instead, '*bhavapaccayā jāti, bhavapaccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ*'. Since he regards the *puthujjana*'s taking himself to be a self as the basis for his notions 'my self was born' and 'my self will die', it follows that 'being' would be the condition for both 'birth' and 'ageing-and-death'. However, that is not what the Buddha himself asserts.

In many suttas dealing with PS the Buddha defines the above terms of the formula, and if we look at these texts we will see that they differ markedly from Ñāṇavīra's explanation of them. The definitions are standardised:

> 'And what, monks, is ageing-and-death? The ageing of beings in the various orders of beings, their old age, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of life, weakness of faculties — this is called ageing. The passing of beings out of the various orders of beings, their passing away, dissolution, disappearance, dying, completion of time, dissolution of the aggregates, laying down of the body — this is called death. So this ageing and this death are (together) called ageing-and-death.
>
> 'And what, monks, is birth? The birth of beings into the various orders of beings, their coming to birth, descent (into a womb), production, manifestation of the aggregates, obtaining the bases for contact — this is called birth'[11].

The above definitions, with their strings of synonyms and concrete imagery, clearly indicate that 'birth' refers to biological birth and 'ageing-and-death' to biological ageing and biological death — not to the *puthujjana*'s notions 'I was born, I will age

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10 Ñāṇavīra does quote one sutta (S 33/I 71) a little further down which he thinks supports his interpretation of *jarāmaraṇanirodha*. However, this passage in no way compels acceptance of his interpretation; it can easily be explained in other ways that do not require us to jettison the traditional understanding of PS.

11 D II 305; M I 49–50; S II 2–3, etc.

and die', or 'My self was born; my self ages and dies'. The textual definitions are perfectly straightforward and unambiguous and give no hint that the Buddha had some other idea to convey about the significance of these terms.

Bhava and Rebirth

8. The definition of *bhava* (Ñāṇavīra's 'being') offered in the Suttas dealing expressly with PS is nowhere near as transparent as the former definitions, the reason being that the definition of the term is set against the particular cosmology that underlies the Buddha's Teaching. Nevertheless, the Suttas provide no basis for Ñāṇavīra's claim that *bhava* means the *puthujjana*'s taking himself to be a self[12].

In the suttas on PS, when the Buddha defines *bhava*, he does so merely by enumerating the three types of becoming:

> 'And what, monks, is becoming? There are these three types of becoming: sense-sphere becoming; fine-material-sphere becoming; immaterial-sphere becoming'[13].

This definition refers to the three planes of existence in the Buddhist cosmos, and the term '*bhava*' thus would signify concrete individual existence in one or another of these three planes. For illumination as to how *bhava* functions in the PS series, our most helpful resource is the Bhava Sutta, a short exchange between the Buddha and Ānanda:

> 'It is said, lord, "becoming, becoming". In what way, lord, is there becoming?'
>
> 'If, Ānanda, there were no *kamma* ripening in the sense realm, would sense-sphere becoming be discerned?'
>
> 'No, lord'.
>
> 'Thus, Ānanda, *kamma* is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving the moisture; for beings obstructed by ignor-

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12 I am not denying that the *puthujjana* does take himself to be a self, for that is precisely the act that defines him as a *puthujjana*. I am only disputing that this is the correct explanation of *bhava*.

13 S II 3.

ance and fettered to craving, consciousness becomes ground-
ed in a low realm. Thus, Ānanda, there is the production of
re-becoming in the future. It is thus, Ānanda, that there is
becoming.

'If, Ānanda, there were no *kamma* ripening in the fine-
material realm, would fine-material becoming be discerned?'

'No, lord'.

'Thus, Ānanda, *kamma* is the field, consciousness is the
seed, craving the moisture; for beings obstructed by ignor-
ance and fettered to craving, consciousness becomes ground-
ed in a middling realm. Thus, Ānanda, there is the produc-
tion of re-becoming in the future. It is thus, Ānanda, that
there is becoming.

'If, Ānanda, there were no *kamma* ripening in the
immaterial realm, would immaterial becoming be discerned?'

'No, lord'.

'Thus, Ānanda, *kamma* is the field, consciousness is the
seed, craving the moisture; for beings obstructed by ignor-
ance and fettered to craving, consciousness becomes ground-
ed in a superior realm. Thus, Ānanda, there is the produc-
tion of re-becoming in the future. It is thus, Ānanda, that
there is becoming'[14].

Clearly, this sutta is offering a succinct statement of the same
basic process described more extensively in the usual twelve-
factored formula of PS: When there is *avijjā* and *taṇhā*, ig-
norance and craving, then *kamma* — the volitional action of a be-
ing — effects the production of a new existence or 're-becoming
in the future' (*āyatiṁ punabbhava*) in a realm that corresponds to
the qualitative potential of that *kamma*. It is for this reason that
the Commentaries interpret *bhava* in the usual PS formula as
having two aspects that pertain to two different lives: one aspect
called *kammabhava*, 'kammically active existence', which refers to
the *kamma* with the potential of generating rebirth in one or an-
other of the three realms; the other aspect called *upapattibhava*,

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14   A I 223–4.

'rebirth existence', which refers to existence produced in one or another of the three realms[15]. Although such a distinction is not explicitly drawn in the Suttas, it seems to be implied by such passages as the one just quoted above.

9. Ñāṇavīra claims that *jāti* does not mean rebirth (§9), and he is correct insofar as the word '*jāti*' does not by itself convey the sense of '*re*-birth'. Nevertheless, within the context of PS (and elsewhere in the Buddha's Teaching), *jāti* must be understood as implying rebirth. Insofar as *jāti*, 'the manifestation of the aggregates', etc., results from the formation of a new *bhava* 'in the future' by the *avijjā*, *taṇhā* and *kamma* of the preceding existence, any instance of *jāti* is invariably a rebirth of the same continuum of consciousness. The stream of consciousness of the preceding life, 'grounded' in a particular realm by reason of its *kamma*, springs up in that realm and comes to growth and full manifestation there.

Contrary to Ñāṇavīra, throughout the Suttas we often find the word '*jāti*' used in conjunction with the terms '*saṁsāra*' and '*punabbhava*' to underscore the fact that rebirth is intended. Take, for instance, the Buddha's famous 'Hymn of Victory' from the Dhammapada (v.153):

> 'I ran vainly through the wandering of many births
> Seeking the house-builder. Painful is birth again and again'.

> *Anekajātisaṁsāraṁ sandhāvissaṁ anibbisaṁ*
> *Gahakārakaṁ gavesanto dukkhā jāti punappunaṁ.*

Or: 'A bhikkhu has abandoned the wandering on in births with its re-becoming' (*bhikkhuno ponobhaviko jātisaṁsāro pahīno*; M I 139). Or the verse of Udāna 4:9:

> 'For the monk with a peaceful mind,
> When he has cut off craving for becoming,
> The wandering on in births is destroyed;
> For him there is no re-becoming'.

> *Ucchinnabhavataṇhassa santacittassa bhikkhuno*

Vikkhīno jātisaṁsāro natthi tassa punabbhavo.

Again, consider the declaration of final knowledge uttered by the arahants: 'This is my last birth; now there is no re-becoming' (*ayam antimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo;* M I 167,173).

The above passages will show us, moreover, that the wedge that Ñāṇavīra tries to drive between *jāti* and *punabbhavā-bhinibbatti* (in §10) is a spurious one. While in some passages the two are set in a conditional relationship to one another (the latter being a condition for the former — see S II 65), they are so closely connected that their meanings almost overlap. In fact, the word '*abhinibbatti*' is used as one of the synonyms of *jāti* in the standard definition of the latter. Apparently, when *abhinibbatti* is included in *jāti* we should understand *jāti* as comprising both conception and physical birth, while when they are differentiated *abhinibbatti* means conception and *jāti* is restricted to full emergence from the womb.

10. Now that we have adduced textual definitions of the terms 'ageing-and-death', 'birth' and 'becoming', let us see how they link up in the formula of PS, as explained by the Buddha himself. The text which elucidates this matter most succinctly is the Mahā-nidāna Sutta (D 15/II 57-8). To bring out the meaning I quote the relevant passage slightly simplified, without the catechistic format and with the sequence of conditions stated in direct order rather than in reverse order:

> 'If there were absolutely no clinging of any kind — no clinging to sense pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to rules and observances, clinging to a doctrine of self — then, in the complete absence of clinging, becoming would not be discerned: thus clinging is the condition for becoming.
>
> 'If there were absolutely no becoming of any kind — no sense-sphere becoming, fine-material becoming, im-material becoming — then, in the complete absence of becoming, birth would not be discerned: thus becoming is the condition for birth.
>
> 'If there were absolutely no birth of any kind — that is, of gods in the state of gods, of celestials in the state of celestials, of spirits, demons, humans, animals, birds and

reptiles each in their own state — then, in the complete absence of birth, ageing-and-death would not be discerned: thus birth is the condition for ageing and death'.

Ñāṇavīra would read this passage to mean: Because the *puthujjana* clings to a belief in self, he goes on being a self (of one or another of the three types); and because he assumes that he is such a self, he thinks 'my self was born' and 'my self will grow old and die' (see Note, §10). If, however, we read this passage in the light of the definitions of birth, ageing and death found in the Suttas, and in the light of the Bhava Sutta (pp.13-14), a very different meaning would emerge, which might be formulated thus: Because of clinging of any kind (not only clinging to a doctrine of self), one engages in actions that have the potential to ripen in one or another of the three realms of becoming. These actions dispose consciousness towards these realms. At death, if clinging persists, the predominant *kamma* steers consciousness towards the appropriate realm, i.e., it grounds the 'seed' of consciousness in that realm, and thereby generates a new existence. This 'production of re-becoming' comes to fulfilment in birth — that is, birth into one of the numerous classes of beings distributed among the three realms of becoming — and once birth occurs, it is inevitably followed by ageing-and-death.

Three Types of Saṅkhāra

11. Now let us turn to the other major plank in Ñāṇavīra's 'Note on Paṭiccasamuppāda', his treatment of the interconnections between *avijjā, saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* (§§5-6, 11-16). In §5 Ñāṇavīra cites the threefold enumeration of *saṅkhāra* commonly employed by the Suttas when they analyse the individual factors of the PS formula:

> 'And what, monks, are the *saṅkhārā*? There are these three *saṅkhārā*: body-*saṅkhāra*, speech-*saṅkhāra*, mind-*saṅkhāra*. These are called the *saṅkhārā*'[16].

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16   S II 4.

I will leave the word '*saṅkhārā*' untranslated here in order not to prejudice the discussion. Immediately after citing this passage, in order to supply definitions of the three types of *saṅkhārā*, Ñāṇavīra quotes the Cūḷavedalla Sutta (M 44/I 301). This sutta — a discussion between the lay devotee Visākha and his former wife, the arahant bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā — defines three types of *saṅkhārā* bearing exactly the same names as those mentioned in the texts on PS:

> 'And which, lady, is body-*saṅkhāra*, which is speech-*saṅkhāra*, which is mind-*saṅkhāra*?'
>
> 'The in-and-out breaths are body-*saṅkhāra*, thinking-and-pondering are speech-*saṅkhāra*, perception and feeling are mind-*saṅkhāra*'[17].

Having juxtaposed the two quotations, Ñāṇavīra then criticises the traditional interpretation for maintaining that *saṅkhārā* in the PS formula must always be understood as *cetanā* or volition. To make this claim, he asserts, is to wind up holding that the in-and-out breaths, thinking-and-pondering, and perception and feeling, are respectively bodily, verbal and mental volition — a position that is clearly untenable.

Now both quotations cited above, taken in isolation, are perfectly legitimate. This, however, does not establish that the latter quotation is providing a definition of the same terms intended by the former quotation. While the two triads are expressed in Pāli by the same three compounds — *kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra* — Ñāṇavīra overlooks a fact of prime importance for determining their meaning: namely, that in the Suttas the contexts in which the two triads appear are always kept rigorously separate. The definition of the three *saṅkhārā* found in the Cūḷavedalla Sutta, and elsewhere in the Canon (at S IV 293), does not occur in the context of PS nor in a context that even touches on PS. This particular definition of the three types of *saṅkhārā* — *kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra* — always occurs in the course of a discussion on the attainment of

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17   M 44/I 301.

the cessation of perception and feeling (saññāvedayita-nirodha)[18]. It is intended to prepare the way for an explanation of the order in which the three types of saṅkhāra cease when a monk enters the attainment of cessation.

But that is not all. Not only are the three saṅkhāra of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta always rigorously excluded from discussions of PS, but among all the suttas in which the Buddha exemplifies the expressions 'avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā' ('with ignorance as condition, formations') and 'saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṁ' ('with formations as condition, consciousness'), there is not a single text in which he explains saṅkhāra in a way that has any relevance to the three kinds of saṅkhāra of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta. The two types of discussions of saṅkhāra — the threefold enumeration of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta and the threefold enumeration in the PS context — though employing the same terms, are assigned to completely separate compartments. Nowhere in the Sutta Piṭaka does the one triad extend beyond its own context and bear any explicit relationship to the other context. If the Buddha had intended the saṅkhāra that are conditioned by ignorance and that condition consciousness to signify the in-and-out breaths, thinking-and-pondering, and perception and feeling, then one could reasonably expect to find at least one sutta on PS where he exemplifies saṅkhāra by way of the Cūḷavedalla triad. However, not a single sutta of such a nature can be found anywhere in the entire Pāli Canon[19].

Lack of textual corroboration is only one problem with

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18   Two of these saṅkhāra — kāyasaṅkhāra and cittasaṅkhāra — are also mentioned in connection with the 16 aspects of the practice of mindfulness of breathing. See M III 82–3.

19   I should add here a brief rejoinder to Ñāṇavīra's remark at §6 that the traditional interpretation (in its treatment of the saṅkhāra factor in PS) 'altogether ignores the Cūḷavedalla Sutta'. It certainly does not. The Visuddhimagga, in its explication of the term 'saṅkhāra' in relation to PS, mentions the triad of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta, but it distinguishes this triad from the types of saṅkhāra that are conditioned by ignorance (Vism XVII,47).

Ñāṇavīra's proposal to read the Cūḷavedalla triad of *saṅkhāra* into the interpretation of the PS formula. Another objection, even more formidable, can be brought against this suggestion, namely, that it leads to incoherence. For the *saṅkhāra* of the PS formula must depend upon ignorance as their necessary condition and must cease with the cessation of ignorance, but the three *saṅkhāra* of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta do not meet this requirement. These *saṅkhāra* are not necessarily dependent upon ignorance and do not cease with the ceasing of ignorance. Although the arahant has completely eradicated ignorance, he continues to breathe in and out (except when in the fourth *jhāna* and higher attainments), to think and ponder (except when in the second and higher *jhānas*), and to perceive and feel (except when in the cessation of perception and feeling). But, what does cease for the arahant with the cessation of ignorance are volitional formations — *saṅkhāra* understood as *sañcetanā*. Whereas the non-arahant's bodily, verbal and mental activities are constructive forces conditioned by ignorance that sustain the round of rebirths, the arahant's activities are kammically extinct. They no longer sustain the continuation of the round, no longer project consciousness into any new mode of becoming.

12. In analysing the teaching of PS, the texts use the two terms *cittasaṅkhāra* and *manosaṅkhāra* as though they were interchangeable. This is not typical of the Suttas, which usually reserve *citta* and *mano* for separate contexts. When the texts define *saṅkhāra* in the PS formula, they do so by enumerating the three types of *saṅkhāra*: *kāyasaṅkhāra*, *vacīsaṅkhāra*, *cittasaṅkhāra*; yet they do not take the further step of defining these terms as such. Then, when they *exemplify* the function of *saṅkhāra* in PS, they employ the triad of *kāyasaṅkhāra*, *vacīsaṅkhāra*, *manosaṅkhāra*. The Pāli Commentaries identify the two triads, taking them as alternative expressions for the same thing; both are understood to refer to bodily volition, verbal volition and mental volition (*kāyasañcetanā*, *vacīsañcetanā*, *manosañcetanā*). Nāṇavīra takes issue with this identification, holding that the two triads must be distinguished. He admits that the second triad is to be identified with *cetanā*, but insists that the terms used in the first triad have to be understood by way of the explanation given in the

Cūḷavedalla Sutta.

This assertion, as we have seen, does not receive confirmation from the Suttas. The original source on which the Pāli Commentaries base their identification of the two triads is the Vibhaṅga of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. In that work, in the Suttanta Bhājaniya (Sutta Analysis) section of its Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, we read:

> What are the saṅkhārā that are conditioned by ignorance? Meritorious saṅkhāra, demeritorious saṅkhāra, imperturbable saṅkhāra; body-saṅkhāra, speech-saṅkhāra, mind-saṅkhāra. . .
>
> Therein, bodily volition is body-saṅkhāra; verbal volition is speech-saṅkhāra; mental volition (manosañcetanā) is mind-saṅkhāra (cittasaṅkhāra). These are called the saṅkhāra conditioned by ignorance[20].

Ñāṇavīra may refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Vibhaṅga and insist that he will not relinquish his view unless a sutta can be brought forward confirming this definition. This attitude, however, would appear to be an unreasonable one. Even though the more elaborate conceptions of the Abhidhamma may be products of a later age than the Suttas, the Suttanta Bhājaniya sections of the Vibhaṅga can make a cogent claim to antiquity. Evidence suggests that this portion of the Vibhaṅga is extremely old, dating from perhaps the third century BCE, and thus represents the understanding of the Buddhist community from a period not long after the Buddha's Parinibbāna. It would even be plausible to maintain that this body of material was originally an old commentary on basic Suttanta terminology going back to the very first generation of the Buddha's disciples; it is not specifically Abhidhammic in character and may have been absorbed into the Abhidhamma Piṭaka owing to the lack of any other suitable repository for it.

In any case, in the absence of direct clarification of the issue

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20   Vibhaṅga, §116 (Burmese script ed.).

in the Suttas themselves, the Vibhaṅga becomes the most ancient source to which we can turn for help in clarifying PS terminology. There we find the triad of *kāyasaṅkhāra*, *vacīsaṅkhāra* and *cittasaṅkhāra* explained in a way that confirms the exclusive identification of the *saṅkhārā* factor in the PS formula with *cetanā*. This lends weight to the view that this second link should be taken as *kamma* and its relation to *viññāṇa* as that of the kammic cause from the preceding existence.

The Meaning of 'Saṅkhārā'

13. I intend to examine very briefly all the suttas that help shed light on the *saṅkhārā* factor in the PS formulation, as found in the Nidāna Saṃyutta, the Buddha's short discourses on dependent arising. But first a few words should be said about Ñāṇavīra's general understanding of the word '*saṅkhārā*'. He maintains that this word has a univocal meaning relevant to all the contexts in which it occurs. The meaning he assigns to it is that of 'something upon which something else depends' (§11); hence his rendering 'determinations'. The Suttas themselves do not offer a single etymological derivation of the word with unrestricted application. The well-known derivation — *saṅkhataṃ abhisaṅkharonti ti tasmā saṅkhārā ti vuccanti* (in Ñāṇavīra's terminology, 'They determine the determined, therefore they are called determinations') — applies specifically to *saṅkhārā* as the fourth of the five aggregates, not to *saṅkhārā* in all usages. In this context they obviously signify *cetanā*, volition, understood as a constructive force, and thus an active derivation is appropriate.

The Pāli Commentaries offer two derivations of the word '*saṅkhārā*'. One is active (as given above), the other passive (*saṅkharīyantī ti saṅkhārā*). Thus the Commentaries hold that the word can signify *either* things that actively produce other things, *or* things that are produced by other things. Which meaning is relevant depends on the context. In the two contexts of PS and the fourth aggregate, the active sense is relevant, as in both cases the *saṅkhārā* are volitions. However, in such statements as '*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*', etc., the Commentaries explain that *saṅkhārā* should be understood as *saṅkhata-saṅkhārā*, that is, as conditioned things.

According to the Majjhima Nikāya Commentary, the passive sense also pertains to two of the three *saṅkhārā* of the Cūḷavedalla Sutta: (i) the in-and-out breaths are body-*saṅkhāra* because they are determined by the body, made by the body, produced by the body; (iii) perception and feeling are mind-*saṅkhāra* because they are determined by the mind, made by the mind, produced by the mind[21]. In contrast, (ii) thinking-and-pondering, as speech-*saṅkhāra*, play an active role: they are determinants of speech[22].

The commentarial recognition of a twofold derivation of the term '*saṅkhārā*' seems to be confirmed by the texts. For instance, the Cūḷavedalla Sutta explains:

'In-and-out breaths, friend Visākha, are bodily, these things are dependent upon the body, that is why the in-and-out breaths are bodily *saṅkhāra*. . . Perception and feeling are mental, these things are dependent upon the mind; that is why perception and feeling are mind-*saṅkhāra*'[23].

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21   Commentary to Cūḷavedalla Sutta. The Pāli reads: *Kāyena saṅkhariyati karīyati nibbattīyati ti kāyasaṅkhāro; cittena saṅkhariyati karīyati nibbattīyati ti cittasaṅkhāro.*

22   *Vācaṁ saṅkharoti karoti nibbatteti ti vacīsaṅkhāro.* I here follow the reading of the Burmese-script Sixth Council edition, which has the support of the Sub-commentary, rather than the Sinhala-script Hewavitarne edition, which reads this sentence as a passive, parallel to the definitions of the other two types of *saṅkhārā*. Apparently the latter reading, which is at variance with the sense of the sutta text, is a scribal error. The PTS edition was not available to me.

23   M I 301: *Assāsapassāsā kho āvuso Visākha kāyikā ete dhammā kāyapaṭibaddhā, tasmā assāsapassāsā kāyasaṅkhāro. . . saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro ti.*

It should be noted that Ñāṇavīra, in translating '*paṭibaddha*' as 'bound up with', does not capture quite the precise nuance of the Pāli. As used in the texts, '*paṭibaddha*' generally signifies that the thing which it qualifies is subject to or dependent upon the thing to which it is joined in the compound or otherwise related: see in this connection M I 384; II 223; A V 87; Dhp 284. Thus when it is said that *assāsapassāsa* (in-breaths and out-breaths) are *kāyapaṭibaddhā dhammā* (things bound to the body), this means that they are sub-

In contrast, Ñāṇavīra's insistence on assigning an exclusively active sense to *saṅkhārā* compels him to apply the old Procrustean bed of exegesis to several passages that do not easily submit to his interpretation. For example, in his separate note on *Saṅkhāra*[24] he attempts to explain how the reference to *saṅkhārā* in the Mahāsudassana Sutta (D 17/II 169ff.) can be interpreted in line with his view of *saṅkhārā* as active determinations. In this sutta the Buddha, after describing all the rich endowments and possessions of King Mahāsudassana, a king of the distant past, concludes with a homily on impermanence: 'See, Ānanda, how all those *saṅkhārā* have passed, ceased, altered. So impermanent, Ānanda, are *saṅkhārā* ... this is enough for weariness with all *saṅkhārā*, enough for dispassion, enough for release'. Ñāṇavīra discerns a cryptic message concealed in this passage thus: 'Those things [the possessions, etc.] were *saṅkhārā*; they were things on which King Mahāsudassana depended for his very identity; they determined his person as "King Mahāsudassana", and with their cessation the thought "I am King Mahāsudassana" came to an end'. There is nothing in the sutta itself to support this interpretation, and the text (as well as others of similar character) reads so much more naturally if we take *saṅkhārā* simply to mean conditioned things of the world. Moreover, other suttas can be found which include the same final exhortation on dispassion, yet which provide absolutely no ground for seeing the term *saṅkhārā* there as determinants of anyone's personal identity (see e.g., the Anamatagga Saṃyutta, S 15/II 178ff.).

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ordinate to and dependent upon the body, not that they are determinations for the body. Consider, in contrast, the explanation of why 'thinking-and-pondering' are called speech-*saṅkhāra*: 'First having thought and pondered, afterwards one breaks into speech; that is why thinking-and-pondering are speech-*saṅkhāra*' (*pubbe kho vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro ti*). Here the active sense is clearly in evidence.

24   *Clearing the Path*, pp.107-8.

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ÑĀṆAVĪRA THERA'S
'A NOTE ON PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA'

Part Two

Bhikkhu Bodhi

Saṅkhārā in the PS Formula

14. Let us now turn directly to the Nidāna Saṃyutta to see how the suttas on PS treat the term '*saṅkhārā*' in relation to *avijjā* and *viññāṇa*. As the suttas in this collection that expand upon the stock formula are conveniently few in number, we can take a brief look at each in turn. Of these texts, two establish the two major paradigms for the interpretation of *saṅkhārā*, namely, that formulated in terms of the three doors of volitional action and that formulated in terms of three kammically graded types of volition. Besides these, three additional texts can be found to shed light on the problem. I should stress at once that the Nidāna Saṃyutta incorporates virtually all the shorter discourses of the Buddha dealing with PS and hence should be taken as definitive in its presentation of the meaning and function of the constituent items in the formula.

We will begin with the Bhūmija Sutta, the paradigmatic text for distinguishing *saṅkhārā* by way of the doors of action:

'When there is the body, Ānanda, because of bodily volition there arises internally pleasure and pain. When there is speech, because of verbal volition there arises internally pleasure and pain. When there is the mind, because of mental volition there arises internally pleasure and pain.

'With ignorance as condition, either by oneself, Ānanda, one forms that body-*saṅkhāra* (speech-*saṅkhāra*, mind-*saṅkhāra*) on account of which that pleasure and pain arises internally; or because of others one forms that body-*saṅkhāra* (speech-*saṅkhāra*, mind-*saṅkhāra*) on account of which that pleasure and pain arises internally ...

'Ignorance is included among these things. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance that

body does not exist (that speech does not exist, that mind does not exist) on account of which that pleasure and pain arises internally'[25].

Here the three *saṅkhārā* that are said to be conditioned by ignorance are explicitly identified with the three types of volition. The sutta employs the term '*manosaṅkhāra*' rather than '*cittasaṅkhāra*', but in the absence of any other exemplification of *cittasaṅkhāra* in the PS context we can take the terms as interchangeable; though such usage is not common it is not totally foreign to the Nikāyas and other instances can be cited of the synonymous use of *citta* and *mano*[26].

According to the commentary, this volition is to be understood as *kamma*, and the pleasure and pain that arise internally as *vipākavedanā*, as feelings resulting from that *kamma*. A temporal separation between volition and the resulting pleasure and pain may not be explicitly mentioned in the text, but if we read the above passage against the broader background of the Suttas, we can readily infer that an implicit temporal gap is intended. One sutta in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, on the correlations between *kamma* and its fruit, helps us to understand the process by which *saṅkhārā* function as conditions for the arising of pleasant and painful feeling:

> 'Here, monks, someone forms an afflictive body-*saṅkhāra*, speech-*saṅkhāra*, mind-*saṅkhāra*. Having done so, he is reborn into an afflictive world. When he is reborn there afflictive contacts contact him, and he experiences feelings that are extremely painful. . . Someone forms a non-afflictive body-*saṅkhāra* (etc.) . . . he is reborn into a non-afflictive world. . . Non-afflictive contacts contact him and

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25   S 12:25/II 39–40.

26   See, for example, S I 93, 102; II 231, 271, where *kāya, vacī, citta* (or *cetas*) are used in a context where one would normally expect *kāya, vacī, mano*. The Buddha also says: *yañ ca vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇam iti pi* (S II 94).

> he experiences feelings that are extremely pleasant. . .
> Someone forms both an afflictive and a non-afflictive body-
> *saṅkhāra* (etc.) . . . he is reborn into a world that is both
> afflictive and non-afflictive. Afflictive and non-afflictive
> contacts contact him, and he experiences feelings that are
> both painful and pleasant'[27].

Here the term used is again '*manosaṅkhāra*', and it is clear
that the three *saṅkhāra* are primarily of interest because they
determine a person's plane of rebirth and the quality of affective
experience prevailing in his life. The sutta is not manifestly
concerned with PS, but if we examine the sequence of events
being described we would find, embedded in it, a segment of the
standard PS formula. These events can be represented thus:
saṅkhāra > rebirth into a world > contact > feeling. From the
Mahānidāna Sutta (D 15/II 63) we know that rebirth into any
world involves the co-arising of consciousness and name-and-
form, and from the latter we can elicit the six sense bases as the
condition for contact. This suffices to establish that the above text
and the PS formula are defining the same situation, and here it is
evident that the *saṅkhāra* serve as condition for the arising of
pleasure and pain across the gap of lifetimes.

The last paragraph of the above quotation from the Bhūmija
Sutta expresses obliquely the converse side of the relationship.
Here, when the Buddha states that with the cessation of ig-
norance, body, speech and mind no longer serve as conditions for
pleasure and pain to arise internally, what is meant is that these
doors of action cease to be instruments for generating *saṅkhāra*,
actions with the power to produce re-becoming. When ignorance
is eliminated, volition no longer functions as *saṅkhāra*, as a
constructive power that builds up new edifices of personal
existence in future lives. The actions of the arahant, whether
performed by body, speech or mind, are *khīṇabīja*, 'with seed
destroyed' (Ratana Sutta, Sn 235); they are incapable of ripening
in the future, and hence no longer serve as conditions for

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27   A II 230–2; see too M I 389.

pleasure and pain to arise.

15. The second major paradigm for understanding the *saṅkhārā* factor in PS, and its relations to *avijjā* and *viññāṇa*, grades the *saṅkhārā* according to their ethical quality, which in turn indicates the type of rebirth they produce. This paradigm is delineated in the following passage:

> 'Bhikkhus, if a person immersed in ignorance forms a meritorious *saṅkhāra*, consciousness goes on towards merit. If he forms a demeritorious *saṅkhāra*, consciousness goes on towards demerit. If he forms an imperturbable *saṅkhāra*, consciousness goes on towards the imperturbable'[28].

Once again it is obvious that we must understand *saṅkhārā* as volition (*cetanā*). And once again it is not so obvious that the relationship between *saṅkhārā* and consciousness may be a causal one operating across different lives. The commentary to the sutta explains that the phrase 'consciousness goes on towards merit' can be understood in two complementary ways: (i) the kammically active consciousness associated with the volition 'goes on towards' meritorious *kamma*, i.e., it accumulates merit; and (ii) the consciousness resulting from the merit 'goes on towards' the result of merit, i.e., it reaps the fruit of that merit. The same principle of interpretation applies to the other two cases — the demeritorious and the imperturbable. Thus the point of the passage, as understood from the traditional perspective, may be paraphrased thus: A meritorious volition infuses consciousness with a meritorious quality and thereby steers consciousness towards rebirth in a realm resulting from merit; a demeritorious volition infuses consciousness with a demeritorious quality and thereby steers consciousness towards rebirth in a realm resulting from demerit; an imperturbable volition infuses consciousness with an imperturbable quality (*āneñja*) and thereby steers consciousness towards

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28   S 12:51/II 82: *Avijjāgato 'yaṁ bhikkhave purisapuggalo puññañ ce saṅkhāraṁ abhisaṅkharoti puññūpagaṁ hoti viññāṇaṁ, apuññañ ce saṅkhāraṁ abhisaṅkharoti apuññūpagaṁ hoti viññāṇaṁ, āneñjañ ce saṅkhāraṁ abhisaṅkharoti āneñjūpagaṁ hoti viññāṇaṁ.*

rebirth in an imperturbable realm, i.e., a realm corresponding to the fourth *jhāna* or the formless meditative attainments.

Ñāṇavīra himself rejects this interpretation of the passage. He writes (§15):

> . . . Nothing in the Sutta suggests that *puññupaga viññāṇa* is anything other than the meritorious consciousness of one who is determining or intending merit. (When merit is intended by an individual he is conscious of his world as 'world-for-doing-merit-in', and consciousness has thus 'arrived at merit'.)

My reading of this passage differs from that of Ñāṇavīra. Even if we disregard the commentarial explanation sketched above and focus solely on the text, we would find that the structure of the sutta itself suggests that a *kamma-vipāka* relationship is intended by the link between *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa*. For the sutta continues: When a bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance and aroused knowledge, he does not form any of the three types of *saṅkhārā*. Thereby he reaches arahantship, and when his body breaks up with the ending of his life, he attains Parinibbāna. Thus 'all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here, and bodily elements only will remain'. Hence in its structure the sutta establishes a contrast between the ignorant worldling and the arahant. The worldling, by fashioning meritorious, demeritorious and imperturbable volitions, projects his consciousness into a new existence, setting in motion once again the entire cycle of birth and death. The arahant cuts off ignorance and stops forming *saṅkhārā*, thus ending the projection of consciousness and the consequent renewal of the cycle.

This conclusion can draw further support from a study of how the word *'upaga'* is used in the Suttas. Ñāṇavīra's rendering 'has arrived at' is actually an error: the word functions not as a past participle (that would be *upagata*) but as a suffix signifying present action. Hence I render it 'goes on towards'. In contexts similar to the one cited above (though perhaps not in all contexts) *'upaga'* most commonly denotes movement towards the fruition of one's past *kamma* — movement fulfilled by the process of rebirth. Consider the stock passage on the exercise of the divine eye:

'With the divine eye, which is purified and superhuman, he sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings go on in accordance with their kamma' (yathākammūpage satte pajānāti)[29].

Then consider the Āneñjasappāya Sutta, on a bhikkhu who practises the 'imperturbable meditations' without reaching arahantship: 'With the break-up of the body, after death, it is possible that his consciousness, evolving on, may go on towards the imperturbable'[30]. Note that the last expression (viññāṇaṁ āneñjūpagaṁ) in the Pāli is identical with the expression found in the Nidāna Saṁyutta sutta cited above, and here, clearly, a transition from one life to another is involved.

We thus see that in the two main models for the saṅkhārā factor of PS presented by the Nidāna Saṁyutta, the term signifies volitional activity, and its bearing on consciousness and feeling is that of kammic cause for a fruit generally maturing in a subsequent life. We should further stress that these two models are neither mutually exclusive nor do they concern different material. Rather, they structure the same material — kammically potent volitions — along different lines depending on the perspective adopted: either door of action or ethical quality.

16. Besides these two major models, the Nidāna Saṁyutta contains two short suttas that help illuminate the role of saṅkhārā in the PS formula. We may begin with the following:

'Bhikkhus, if there is lust, delight, craving for solid food (or any other of the four types of nutriment), consciousness becomes grounded in that and comes to growth. When consciousness is grounded and comes to growth, there is a descent of name-and-form. When there is a descent of name-and-form, there is growth of saṅkhārā. When there is

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29   E.g. M I 183.
30   M II 262. I follow the Burmese-script ed., which reads āneñja where the PTS ed. reads ānañja; the meaning is the same.

growth of *saṅkhārā*, there is the production of re-becoming in the future. When there is the production of re-becoming in the future, there is future birth, ageing and death' (*āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti*)[31].

Here we can see that *saṅkhārā* are responsible for bringing about 're-becoming in the future', that is, for generating rebirth. The structure of the sutta is similar to that of the Bhava Sutta quoted above (pp.13-14) where there are three existences are implied. The first is the existence in which there is craving for food. This craving, accompanied by ignorance, grounds consciousness in its attachment to nutriment. Consciousness — here the kammically active consciousness — is the seed arisen in the old existence that sprouts forth as a new existence, causing a 'descent' of name-and-form into the womb (*nāmarūpassa avakkanti*). Within the second existence the new being, on reaching maturity, engages in volitional activity, which brings on 'the growth of *saṅkhārā*' (*saṅkhārānaṃ vuddhi*). These *saṅkhārā* in turn, enveloped by ignorance and craving, initiate the production of still another existence, the third of the series. This existence (like all others) commences with birth and terminates in ageing and death.

17. Next, let us look at one short sutta in the Nidāna Saṃyutta which explicitly mentions neither *avijjā* nor *saṅkhārā* but refers to them obliquely:

'What one wills, and what one plans, and what lies latent within — this is a support for the continuance of consciousness. When there is a support, there is a grounding of consciousness. When consciousness is grounded and comes to growth, there is the production of re-becoming in the future. When there is the production of re-becoming in the future, future birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair arise. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering'[32].

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31   S 12:64/II 101.
32   S 12:23/II 65. The PTS ed. has mistakenly omitted '*jāti*' from the passage.

In this sutta, *saṅkhārā* are referred to elliptically by the expression *'yaṁ ceteti'*, 'what one wills', and *'yaṁ pakappeti'*, 'what one plans' (*'pakappeti'* is a rare term, apparently synonymous with *'ceteti'*). The expression *'yaṁ anuseti'*, 'what lies latent within', points to the *anusaya*, the latent tendencies, which other texts tell us include the latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā-nusaya*) and the latent tendency of lust or craving (*rāgānusaya*)[33]. Thus the sutta is stating that when one forms volitions on the basis of ignorance and craving, these volitions become the support which grounds consciousness and establishes it in a new existence. Once consciousness becomes so established, it sets in motion the entire production of a new existence, beginning with birth and ending with death, accompanied by all its attendant suffering.

The text which immediately follows the aforementioned sutta in the Nidāna Saṁyutta (S 12:39) begins identically as far as 'and comes to growth', then it continues with 'there is a descent of name-and-form' and the rest of the standard series. This shows that in the PS context 'the descent of name-and-form' (*nāma-rūpassa avakkanti*) is effectively synonymous with 'the production of re-becoming in the future' (*āyatiṁ punabbhavābhinib-batti*). Both signify the unfolding of the rebirth process once consciousness has gained a foothold in the new existence.

18. The above analysis should be sufficient to establish with reasonable certainty that the term *'saṅkhārā'* in the PS formula denotes nothing other than volition (*cetanā*), and that volition enters into the formula because it is the factor primarily responsible for 'grounding' consciousness in the round of repeated becoming and for driving it into a new form of existence in the future. When this much is recognised, it becomes unnecessary for me to say anything about the continuation of Ñāṇavīra's Note on PS from §18 to the end. This convoluted discussion rests upon his assumption that the term *'saṅkhārā'* in the PS formula comprises all the varieties of *saṅkhārā* spoken of in the Suttas, that is, all

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33   See M I 109–10, 393, etc.

things that other things depend on. By adopting this thesis he finds himself obliged to explain how such things as the in-and-out breaths, etc., can be said to be conditioned by ignorance and to be conditions for consciousness. The explanation he devises may be ingenious, but as it receives no confirmation from the Suttas themselves, we can conclude that his account does not correctly represent the Buddha's intention in expounding the teaching of PS.

19.   At this point we can pull together the main threads of our discussion. We have seen that the alternative, 'more satisfactory approach' to PS that Nāṇavīra proposes rests on two planks: one is his interpretation of the nexus of *bhava, jāti* and *jarāmaraṇa*, and the other his interpretation of the nexus of *avijjā, saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa*. The first hinges on ascribing to all three terms meanings that cannot be substantiated by the texts. The second involves a merging of two contexts that the texts rigorously keep separate, namely, the PS context and the definition of the three *saṅkhārā* stated in connection with the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling (found in the Cūḷavedalla Sutta). This error leads Nāṇavīra to assign to the term *saṅkhārā* in the PS context a much wider meaning than the texts allow. It also induces him to overlook various passages from the Suttas that clearly show that *saṅkhārā* in the PS formula must always be understood as volitional activities, considered principally by way of their role in projecting consciousness into a new existence in the future.

20.   To round off this portion of my critique, I would like to take a quick look at a short sutta in the Nidāna Saṁyutta — a terse and syntactically tricky text — that confirms the three-life interpretation of PS almost as explicitly as one might wish. Our text — the Bālapaṇḍita Sutta — opens thus:

> 'Bhikkhus, for the fool, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, this body has thereby been obtained. Hence there is this body and external name-and-form: thus this dyad. Dependent on the dyad there is contact. There are just six sense bases, contacted through which — or through a certain one of them — the fool experiences pleasure and pain'.

Exactly the same thing is said regarding the wise man. The Buddha then asks the monks to state the difference between the two, and when the monks defer, the Master continues:

'For the fool, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, this body has been obtained. But for the fool that ignorance has not been abandoned and that craving has not been eliminated. Why not? Because the fool has not lived the holy life for the complete destruction of suffering. Therefore, with the break-up of the body, the fool is one who goes on to (another) body. Being one who goes on to (another) body, he is not freed from birth, from ageing and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair; he is not freed from suffering, I say'[34].

The wise man, in contrast, having lived the holy life to the full, has abandoned ignorance and eliminated craving. Thus with the break-up of the body he is not one who goes on to another body, and thus he is freed from birth, ageing, death, etc.; he is freed from all kinds of suffering.

Having been included in the Nidāna Saṁyutta, this sutta must be an exemplification of PS, otherwise it would have had no place in that collection. And we can detect, with minor variants and elisions, the main factors of the classical formula. Yet not only are three lifetimes explicitly depicted, but we also find two basic exegetical tools of the Commentaries already well prefigured: the three links (tisandhi) and the four groups (catusaṅkhepa)[35]. The first group — the causal factors of the past life — are the ignorance and craving that brought both the fool and the wise man into the present existence; though saṅkhārā are not mentioned, they are implied by the mention of ignorance. The first link — that between past causes and present results — connects past ignorance and craving with 'this body'. This, obviously, is a conscious body (saviññāṇaka kāya), implying viññāṇa. The text mentions the remaining factors of the present resultant

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34   S 12:19/II 23–4.
35   See Vism XVII, 288–9.

group: *nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā*. Then in the case of the fool, a link takes place between the present resultant group — epitomised by the experience of pleasure and pain — and the present causal group productive of a future life. This group is represented by the present *avijjā* and *taṇhā* that the fool has not discarded. We also know, despite the elision, that *taṇhā* will lead to *upādāna* and a fresh surge of volitional activity motivated by clinging (the *kammabhava* of the Commentaries).

Because of his *avijjā* and *taṇhā* the fool 'goes on to another body' (*kāyūpago hoti*) — note that here we meet once again the word *upaga* which I discussed above (§15), again in connection with the rebirth process. The 'going on to (another) body' can be seen as loosely corresponding to *punabbhavābhinibbatti*, which is followed by birth, ageing and death, etc. These last factors are the fourth group, future effects, linked to the third group, the present-life causes. Thus in this short sutta, which fills out the bare-bones standard formula with some strips of flesh, however lean, we can discern the exegetical tools of the Commentaries already starting to take shape.

In Defence of Tradition

21. Now we can return to the opening section of Ñāṇavīra's 'A Note on Paṭiccasamuppāda' and examine his criticisms of the traditional interpretation.

In §3 he argues against the commentarial view that *vedanā* in the standard PS formula must be restricted to *kammavipāka*. For proof to the contrary he appeals to the Sīvaka Sutta (S 36:21/IV 230-1), in which the Buddha mentions eight causes of bodily pain, of which only the last is *kammavipāka*. On the traditional interpretation, Ñāṇavīra says, this would limit the application of PS to certain bodily feelings but would exclude other types of feeling. Such a view, he holds, is contradicted by the Buddha's unrestricted declaration that pleasure and pain are dependently arisen (*paṭiccasamuppannaṁ kho āvuso sukhadukkhaṁ vuttaṁ bhagavatā*; S II 38).

This objection in no way overturns the traditional view of dependent arising. It should first be pointed out that the notion of PS has a twofold significance, as Ñāṇavīra himself recognises in

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his Note (§18). The notion refers both to a structural principle, i.e. the principle that things arise in dependence on conditions, and it refers to various exemplifications of that structural principle, the most common being the twelvefold formula. Once we call attention to this distinction, the traditional interpretation is easily vindicated: All feelings are dependently arisen insofar as they arise from conditions, principally from contact along with such conditions as sense faculty, object, consciousness, etc. This, however, does not require that all feelings be included in the *vedanā* factor of the standard PS formula. Without violating the structural principle that all feeling is dependently arisen, the Commentaries can consistently confine this factor to the feelings that result from previous *kamma*.

While recognising that the Pāli Commentaries do restrict *vedanā* in the standard PS formula to *vipākavedanā*, we might suggest another line of interpretation different from the commentarial one, a line which is less narrow yet still respects the view that the PS formula describes a process extending over successive lives. On this view, rather than insist that the *vedanā* link be understood literally and exclusively as specific resultant feelings born of specific past *kamma*, we might instead hold that the *vedanā* link should be understood as the result of past *kamma* only in the more general sense that the capacity for experiencing feeling is a consequence of obtaining a sentient organism through the force of past *kamma*[36]. That is, it is past *kamma*, accompanied by ignorance and craving, that brought into being the present sentient organism equipped with its six sense bases through which feeling is experienced. If this view is adopted, we can hold that the capacity for experiencing feeling — the obtaining of a psycho-physical organism (*nāmarūpa*) with its six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*) — is the product of past *kamma*, but we need not hold that every feeling comprised in the *vedanā* link is the fruit of a particular past *kamma*. The predominant feeling-tone of a given existence will be a direct result of specific

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36   In this connection, see the passage from S 12:19 quoted just above.

kamma, but it would not necessarily follow that every passively experienced feeling is actual *vipāka*. This would allow us to include all feeling within the standard PS formula without deviating from the governing principle of the traditional interpretation that the five links, from consciousness through feeling, are fruits of past *kamma*. Although the Commentaries do take the hard line that feeling in the PS formula is *kamma-vipāka* in the strict sense, this 'softer' interpretation is in no way contradicted by the Suttas. Both approaches, however, concur in holding that the five above-mentioned factors in any given life result from the ignorance, craving and volitional activity of the previous life.

22. In the next section (§4) Ñāṇavīra warns us that 'there is a more serious difficulty regarding feeling' posed by the traditional interpretation. He refers to a sutta (A 3:61/I 176) in which, he says, three types of feeling — *somanassa* (joy), *domanassa* (sadness) and *upekkhā* (equanimity) — 'are included in *vedanā*, in the specific context of the PS formulation'. These three feelings, he continues, necessarily involve *cetanā*, intention or volition, as intrinsic in their structure, and therefore the Commentary must either exclude them from *vedanā* in the PS formulation or else must regard them as *vipāka*. Both horns of this dilemma, Ñāṇavīra contends, are untenable: the former, because it contradicts the sutta (which, he says, includes them under *vedanā* in the PS context); the latter, because reflection establishes that these feelings involve *cetanā* and thus cannot be *vipāka*.

The Pāli Commentaries, which adopt the Abhidhamma classification of feeling, hold that *somanassa, domanassa* and *upekkhā* — in the present context — are kammically active rather than resultant feelings. This would exclude them from the *vedanā* factor of the PS formulation, which Ñāṇavīra claims contradicts the sutta under discussion. But if we turn to the sutta itself, as he himself urges, we will find that the section dealing with these three types of feeling does *not* have any discoverable connection with PS, and it is perplexing that Ñāṇavīra should assert it does. PS is introduced later in the sutta, but the section where these three types of feeling are mentioned is not related to any formulation of PS at all. The entire passage reads as follows:

'"These eighteen mental examinations, monks, are the Dhamma taught by me . . . not to be denied by wise recluses and brahmins". Such has been said. And with reference to what was this said? Having seen a form with the eye, one examines a form that is a basis for joy, one examines a form that is a basis for sadness, one examines a form that is a basis for equanimity. (The same is repeated for the other five senses.) It is with reference to this that it was said: "These eighteen mental examinations, monks, are the Dhamma taught by me . . . not to be denied by wise recluses and brahmins"[37].

And that is it. Thus 'the more serious difficulty regarding feeling' that Ñāṇavīra sees in the commentarial interpretation turns out to be no difficulty at all, but only his own strangely careless misreading of the passage.

23. In the same paragraph he derides the commentarial notion that *nāmarūpa* in the PS formulation is *vipāka*. He points out that *nāma* includes *cetanā*, volition or intention, and this leads the Commentary to speak of *vipākacetanā*: 'But the Buddha has said (A 6:63/III 415) that *kamma* is *cetanā* (action is intention), and the notion of *vipākacetanā*, consequently, is a plain self-contradiction'.

Here again the commentarial position can easily be defended. The Buddha's full statement should be considered first:

'It is volition, monks, that I call *kamma*. Having willed (or intended), one does *kamma* by body, speech or mind'[38].

The Buddha's utterance does not establish a mathematical equivalence between *cetanā* and *kamma* such that every instance of volition must be considered *kamma*. As the second part of his

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37   It is possible that Ñāṇavīra was misled here by the word '*paṭicca*', which in this context does not refer to *paṭiccasamuppāda* at all, but has the meaning 'with reference to' or 'because of' and refers to the reason for the Buddha's statement.

38   *Cetanā 'haṁ bhikkhave kammaṁ vadāmi; cetayitvā kammaṁ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā.*

statement shows, his words mean that *cetanā* is the decisive factor in action, that which motivates action and confers upon action the ethical significance intrinsic to the idea of *kamma*. This implies that the ethical evaluation of a deed is to be based on the *cetanā* from which it springs, so that a deed has no kammic efficacy apart from the *cetanā* to which it gives expression. This statement does not imply that *cetanā* (in the non-arahant) is always and invariably *kamma*.

In order to see that the notion of *vipākacetanā* is not self-contradictory nor even unintelligible, we need only consider the statements occasionally found in the Suttas about *nāmarūpa* descending into the womb or taking shape in the womb (e.g. D II 63; also §17 above). It is undeniable that the *nāmarūpa* that 'descends' into the womb is the result of past *kamma*, hence *vipāka*. Yet this *nāma* includes *cetanā*, and thus that *cetanā* too must be *vipāka*. Further, the Suttas establish that *cetanā*, as the chief factor in the fourth aggregate (the *saṅkhārakkhandha*), is present on every occasion of experience. A significant portion of experience is *vipāka*, and thus the *cetanā* intrinsic to this experience must also be *vipāka*. When one experiences feeling as the result of past *kamma*, the *cetanā* co-existing with that feeling must be *vipāka* too. The Commentaries squarely confront the problem of *cetanā* in resultant states of consciousness and explain how this *cetanā* can perform the distinct function of *cetanā* without constituting *kamma* in the common sense of the word. (See Atthasālinī, pp.87-8; *The Expositor* (PTS trans.), pp.116-17.)

The Problem of Time

24.   The main reason for Ñāṇavīra's dissatisfaction with the traditional interpretation of PS emerges in §7 of his Note. The traditional view regards the PS formula as describing a sequence spread over three lives, hence as involving succession in time. For Ñāṇavīra this view closes off the prospect of an immediate ascertainment that one has reached the end of suffering. He argues that since I cannot see my past life or my future life, the three-life interpretation of PS removes a significant part of the formula from my immediate sphere of vision.   Thus, PS becomes 'something that, in part at least, must be taken on trust'. But

because PS is designed to show the prospect for a present solution to the present problem of of existential anxiety, it must describe a situation that pertains entirely to the present. Hence Ñānavīra rejects the view of PS as a description of the rebirth process and instead takes it to define an ever-present existential structure of the unenlightened consciousness.

The examination of the suttas on PS that we have undertaken above has confirmed that the usual twelve-term formula applies to a succession of lives. This conclusion must take priority over all deductive arguments against temporal succession in PS. The Buddha's Teaching certainly does show us the way to release from existential anxiety. Since such anxiety, or agitation (*paritassanā*), depends on clinging, and clinging involves the taking of things to be 'mine', 'what I am', 'my self', the elimination of clinging will bring the eradication of anxiety. The Buddha offers a method of contemplation that focuses on things as *anattā*, as 'not mine', 'not I', 'not my self'. Realisation of the characteristic of *anattā* removes clinging, and with the elimination of clinging anxiety is removed, including existential anxiety over our inevitable ageing and death. This, however, is not the situation being described by the PS formula, and to read the one in terms of the other is to engage in an unjustifiable confounding of distinct frames of reference.

25. From his criticism of the three-life interpretation of PS it appears that Ñānavīra entertains a mistaken conception of what it would mean to see PS within the framework of three lives. He writes (§7):

> Now it is evident that the twelve items, *avijjā* to *jarā-maraṇa*, cannot, if the traditional interpretation is correct, all be seen at once; for they are spread over three successive existences. I may, for example, see present *viññāṇa* to *vedanā*, but I cannot *now* see the *kamma* of the *past* existence — *avijjā* and *saṅkhārā* — that (according to the traditional interpretation) was the cause of these present things. Or I may see *taṇhā* and so on, but I cannot *now* see the *jāti* and *jarāmaraṇa* that will result from these things in the *next* existence.

In Ñāṇavīra's view, on the traditional interpretation, in order to see PS properly I would have to be able to see the *avijjā* and *saṅkhārā* of my past life that brought about this present existence, and I would also have to be able to see the birth, ageing and death I will undergo in a future existence as a result of my present craving. Since such direct perception of the past and future is not, according to the Suttas, an integral part of every noble disciple's range of knowledge, he concludes that the traditional interpretation is unacceptable.

Reflection would show that the consequences that Ñāṇavīra draws do not necessarily follow from the three-life interpretation. To meet his argument, let us first remember that the Commentaries do not treat the twelvefold formula of PS as a rigid series whose factors are assigned to tightly segregated time-frames. The formula is regarded, rather, as an expository device spread over three lives in order to demonstrate the self-sustaining internal dynamics of saṁsāric becoming. The situation defined by the formula is in actuality not a simple linear sequence, but a more complex process by which ignorance, craving and clinging in unison generate renewed becoming in a direction determined by the *saṅkhārā*, the kammically potent volitional activity. Any new existence begins with the simultaneous arising of *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa*, culminating in birth, the full manifestation of the five aggregates. With these aggregates as the basis, ignorance, craving and clinging, again working in unison, generate a fresh store of *kamma* productive of still another becoming, and so the process goes on until ignorance and craving are eliminated.

Hence to see and understand PS within the framework of the three-life interpretation is not a matter of running back mentally into the past to recollect the specific causes in the past life that brought about the present existence, nor of running ahead mentally into the next life to see the future effects of the present causal factors. To see PS effectively is, rather, to see that ignorance, craving and clinging have the inherent power to generate renewed becoming, and then to understand, on this basis, that present existence must have been brought to pass through the ignorance, craving and clinging of the past existence, while any uneradicated ignorance, craving and clinging will engender a new

existence in the future. Although the application of the PS for-
mula involves temporal extension over a succession of lives, what
one sees with immediate vision is not the connection between
particular events in the past, present and future, but conditional
relationships obtaining between *types of phenomena*: that pheno-
mena of a given type B arise in necessary dependence on pheno-
mena of type A, that phenomena of a given type C arise in
necessary dependence on phenomena of type B.

Of these relationships, the most important is the connection
between craving and re-becoming. Craving, underlaid by ig-
norance and fortified by clinging, is the force that originates new
existence and thereby keeps the wheel of Saṁsāra in motion. This
is already implied by the stock formula of the second Noble
Truth: 'And what, monks, is the origin of suffering? It is craving,
which produces re-becoming (*taṇhā ponobhavikā*). . .'. The
essential insight disclosed by the PS formula is that any given
state of existence has arisen through prior craving, and that
uneradicated craving has the inherent power to generate new
becoming. Once this single principle is penetrated, the entire
twelvefold series follows as a matter of course.

26. Ñāṇavīra implicitly attempts to marshal support for his non-
temporal interpretation of PS by quoting as the epigraph to his 'A
Note on Paṭiccasamuppāda' the following excerpt from the
Cūḷasakuludāyi Sutta:

> 'But, Udāyi, let be the past, let be the future, I shall set
> you forth the Teaching: "When there is this, that is; with
> arising of this, that arises; when there is not this, that is not;
> with cessation of this, that ceases"[39].

Here, apparently, the Buddha proposes the abstract principle of
conditionality as an alternative to teachings about temporal
matters relating to the past and future. Since in other suttas the
statement of the abstract principle is immediately followed by the
entire twelve-term formula, the conclusion seems to follow that

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39   M 79/II 32.

any application of temporal distinctions to PS, particularly the attempt to see it as extending to the past and future, would be a violation of the Buddha's intention.

This conclusion, however, would be premature, and if we turn to the sutta from which the quotation has been extracted we would see that the conclusion is actually unwarranted. In the sutta the non-Buddhist wanderer Sakuludāyi tells the Buddha that recently one famous teacher had been claiming omniscience, but when he approached this teacher — who turns out to have been the Jain leader Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta — and asked him a question about the past, the teacher had tried to evade the question, to turn the discussion aside, and became angry and resentful. He expresses the trust that the Buddha is skilled in such matters. The Buddha then says: 'One who can recollect his previous births back for many aeons might engage with me in a fruitful discussion about matters pertaining to the past, while one who has knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings might engage with me in a fruitful discussion about matters pertaining to the future'. Then, since Udāyi has neither such knowledge, at this point the Buddha states: 'But, Udāyi, let be the past, let be the future', and he cites the abstract principle of conditionality. Thus the purport of the Buddha's statement, read as a whole, is that without such super-knowledges of the past and the future, there is no point discussing specific empirical factual matters concerning the past and the future. The Buddha's dismissal of these issues by no means implies that the twelve-fold formula of dependent arising should not be understood as defining the conditional structure of Saṃsāra. It must also be remembered that their discussion takes place with a non-Buddhist ascetic who has not yet gained confidence in the Buddha. It would thus not have been appropriate for the Buddha to reveal to him profound matters that could be penetrated only by one of mature wisdom.

Nāṇavīra tries to buttress his non-temporal interpretation of PS with a brief quotation from the Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta. In that sutta, at the end of a long catechism that explores the twelvefold series of PS in both the order of origination and the order of cessation, the Buddha says to the monks:

'I have presented you, monks, with this Dhamma that is visible (*sandiṭṭhika*), immediate (*akālika*), inviting one to come and see, leading onwards, to be personally realised by the wise'[40].

Ñāṇavīra supposes that 'this Dhamma' refers to *paṭiccasamuppāda*, and that the description of it as *akālika* must mean that the entire formula defines a non-temporal configuration of factors.

If we turn to the sutta from which the quotation comes, we would find that Ñāṇavīra's supposition is directly contradicted by the sequel to the statement on which he bases his thesis. In that sequel (M I 265-70), the Buddha proceeds to illustrate the abstract terms of the PS formula, first with an account of the life process of the blind worldling who is swept up in the forward cycle of origination, and then with an account of the noble disciple, who brings the cycle to a stop. Here temporal succession is in evidence throughout the exposition. The life process begins with conception in the womb (elsewhere expressed as 'the descent of consciousness' into the womb and the 'taking shape of name-and-form' in the womb — D II 63). After the period of gestation comes birth, emergence from the mother's womb, followed in turn by: the gradual maturation of the sense faculties (= the six sense bases), exposure to the five cords of sensual pleasure (= contact), intoxication with pleasant feelings (= feeling), seeking delight in feelings (= craving). Then come clinging, becoming, birth, and ageing and death. Here a sequence of two lives is explicitly defined, while the past life is implied by the *gandhabba*, cited as one of the conditions for conception of the embryo to occur. The *gandhabba* or 'spirit', other texts indicate (see M II 157), is the stream of consciousness of a deceased person coming from the preceding life, and this factor is just as essential to conception as the sexual union of the parents, which it must utilise as its vehicle for entering the womb.

In the contrasting passage on the wise disciple, we see how an individual who has taken birth through the same past causes

goes forth as a monk in the Buddha's dispensation, undertakes the training, and breaks the link between feeling and craving. Thereby he puts an end to the future renewal of the cycle of becoming. By extinguishing 'delight in feelings', a manifestation of craving, he terminates clinging, becoming, birth, ageing and death, and thereby arrives at the cessation of the entire mass of suffering. Thus here, in the very sutta from which the description of PS as 'timeless' is drawn, we see the sequence of PS factors illustrated in a way that indubitably involves temporal succession.

27.   In order to determine what the word *akālika* means in relation to PS, we need to take a careful look at its contextual usage in the suttas on PS. Such suttas are rare, but in the Nidāna Saṁyutta we find one text that can help resolve this problem for us. In this sutta, the Buddha enumerates forty-four 'cases of knowledge' arranged into eleven tetrads. There is knowledge of each factor of PS from *jarāmaraṇa* back to *saṅkhārā*, each defined according to the standard definitions; then there is knowledge of its origination through its condition, of its cessation through the cessation of its condition, and of the Noble Eightfold Path as the way to cessation. With respect to each tetrad, the Buddha says (taking the first as an example):

> 'When the noble disciple understands thus ageing-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, this is his knowledge of the principle (or law: *dhamme ñāṇa*). By means of this principle which is seen, understood, *akālika*, attained, fathomed, he applies the method to the past and the future. When he does so, he knows: "Whatever recluses and brahmins in the past understood ageing-and-death (etc.), all understood them as I do now; whatever recluses and brahmins in the future will understand ageing-and-death (etc.), all will understand them as I do now". This is his knowledge of the consequence (*anvaye ñāṇa*)'[41].

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41   S 12:33/II 56–9.

If we consider the word *akālika* as employed here, the meaning cannot be 'non-temporal' in the sense either that the items conjoined by the conditioning relationship occur simultaneously or that they altogether transcend temporal differentiation. For the same sutta defines birth and death with the stock formulas — 'birth' into any of the orders of beings, etc., 'death' as the passing away from any of the orders of beings, etc. (see §7 above). Surely these events, birth and death, cannot be either simultaneous or extra-temporal. But the word *akālika* is here set in correlation with a series of words signifying knowledge, and this gives us the key to its meaning. Taken in context, the word qualifies, not the factors such as birth and death themselves, but the principle (*dhamma*) that is seen and understood. The point made by calling the principle *akālika* is that this principle is known and seen *immediately*, that is, that the conditional relationship between any two terms is known directly with perceptual certainty[42]. Such immediate knowledge is contrasted with knowledge of the consequence, or inferential knowledge, by which the disciple does not grasp a principle by immediate insight but by reflection on what the principle entails.

Exactly the same conclusion regarding the meaning of *akālika* would follow if we return to the passage from M I 265 quoted above (see §26) and examine it more closely in context. We would then see that the Buddha does *not* link the statement that the Dhamma is *sandiṭṭhiko akāliko* to the formulation of PS in any way that suggests the factors or their relationships are non-temporal. The statement does not even follow immediately upon the catechism on PS. Rather, after questioning the monks in detail about the PS formula, the Buddha asks them whether they would speak as they do (i.e., affirming the connections established

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42   It might even be maintained that the word *akālika* here functions as an 'adverb of manner' qualifying the following past participle *pattena*. The word would then define the way in which the disciple understands the teaching: he has 'attained' (i.e., understood) dependent arising immediately. The use of the instrumental case to signify adverbs of manner is well attested in Pāli.

by the formula) merely out of respect for him as their Teacher; the monks answer in the negative. He then asks, 'Isn't it the case that you speak only of what you have known for yourselves, seen for yourselves, understood for yourselves?'[43] To this the monks reply, 'Yes, venerable sir'. At this point the Buddha says: 'I have presented you, monks, with this Dhamma that is visible, immediate, . . . to be personally realised by the wise'. Each of the terms of this stock formula conveys, from a slightly different angle, the same essential idea: that the Dhamma is something that is fully accessible to cognition, that it can be seen directly, immediately, personally, indubitably. These terms highlight, not the intrinsic character of the Dhamma, but its relation to our capacity for knowledge and understanding. They are all epistemological in import, concerned with how the Dhamma is to be known, not with the temporal status of the known. Again, the conclusion is established: The Dhamma (inclusive of PS) is *akālika* because it is to be known immediately by direct inspection, not by inference or by faith in the word of another.

Thus, although birth and death may be separated by seventy or eighty years, one ascertains immediately that death occurs in dependence on birth and cannot occur if there is no birth. Similarly, although the ignorance and *saṅkhārā* that bring about the descent of consciousness into the womb are separated from that consciousness by a gap of lifetimes, one ascertains immediately that the descent of consciousness into the womb has come about through ignorance and *saṅkhārā*. And again, although future becoming, birth, and ageing and death are separated from present craving and clinging by a gap of lifetimes, one ascertains immediately that if craving and clinging persist until the end of the lifespan, they will bring about reconception, and hence engender a

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43   *Nanu bhikkhave yad tumhākaṁ sāmaṁ ñātaṁ diṭṭhaṁ viditaṁ tad eva tumhe vadethā ti.* It should be noted that the three past participles used here all appear in the sutta passage on the forty-four cases of knowledge; all that is missing is *akālikena paṭṭena*, but the sense of this is supplied by the declaration to follow, i.e. that the Dhamma is *akālika*.

future cycle of becoming. It is in this sense that the Buddha declares PS to be *sandiṭṭhika, akālika* — 'directly visible, immediate' — not in the sense that the terms of the formula have nothing to do with time or temporal succession.

The Knowledge of Final Deliverance

28. I will conclude this critique by highlighting one particularly disquieting consequence entailed by Ñāṇavīra's assertion that PS has nothing to do with rebirth, with temporal succession, or with *kamma* and its fruit. Now the Suttas indicate that the arahants know that they have terminated the succession of births; this is their knowledge and vision of final deliverance (*vimuttiñāṇa-dassana*). Everywhere in the texts we see that when they attain liberation, they exclaim: 'Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more (coming back) to this world', or: 'This is my last birth; now there is no more re-becoming'. These statements, found throughout the Canon, indicate that the arahants know for themselves that they are liberated from the round of rebirths.

Investigation of the texts will also show that the ground for the arahant's assurance regarding his liberation is his knowledge of PS, particularly in the sequence of cessation. By seeing in himself the destruction of the *āsavas*, the 'cankers' of sensual craving, craving for becoming, and ignorance, the arahant knows that the entire series of factors mentioned in PS has come to an end: ignorance, craving, clinging and kammically potent volitional activities have ended in this present life, and no more compound of the five aggregates, subject to birth and death, will arise in the future. Perhaps the clearest example of this is the Kaḷāra Sutta (S 12:32/II 51-3). When the Buddha asks Venerable Sāriputta how he can declare 'Destroyed is birth', he replies in terms of the destruction of its cause, *bhava*, and the Buddha's questioning leads him back along the chain of conditions to *vedanā*, for which he no longer has any craving.

Since knowledge of PS in its aspect of cessation is the basis for the arahant's knowledge that he has destroyed birth and faces no more re-becoming in the future, if this formula does not describe the conditional structure of Saṁsāra it is difficult to see

how the arahant could have definite knowledge that he has reached the end of Saṃsāra. If arahants have to accept it on trust from the Buddha that Saṃsāra exists and can be terminated (as Ñāṇavīra would hold of those arahants who lack knowledge of past births), then those arahants would also have to accept it on trust from the Buddha that they have attained release from Saṃsāra. Such a denouement to the entire quest for the Deathless would be far from satisfactory indeed.

29. It seems that Ñāṇavīra, in his eagerness to guarantee an immediate solution to the present problem of existential anxiety, has arrived at that solution by closing off the door to a direct ascertainment that one has solved the existential problem that the Suttas regard as paramount, namely, the *beginningless* problem of our *beginningless* bondage to Saṃsāra. Fortunately, however, the Suttas confirm that the noble disciple does have direct knowledge that all beings bound by ignorance and craving dwell within beginningless Saṃsāra, and that the destruction of ignorance brings cessation of becoming, Nibbāna. Consider how Sāriputta explains the faculty of understanding (and I stress that this is the faculty of *understanding* (paññindriya), not the faculty of faith):

> 'When, lord, a noble disciple has faith, is energetic, has set up mindfulness and has a concentrated mind, it can be expected that he will understand thus: "This Saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning; no first point can be discerned of beings roaming and wandering on, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving. But with the remainderless fading away and ceasing of ignorance, a mass of darkness, this is the peaceful state, this is the sublime state: the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna". That understanding, lord, is his faculty of understanding'[44].

The Buddha not only applauds this statement with the words 'Sādhu, sādhu!' but to certify its truth he repeats Sāriputta's words in full.

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44   S V 225-6.

GOTAMA THE PHYSICIAN: DHAMMA, SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

David Evans

Work by Professor Gombrich revising Gotama Buddha's dates forward some sixty to eighty years has recently been summarised in an article[1] which offers a new list of contemporaries on that basis, among them the legendary founder of Western medicine, Hippocrates of Cos. It therefore seems opportune to explore the significance of medical analogies in the Nikāyas which, I shall argue, take us to the very roots of primitive Buddhism and also illuminate broader questions regarding the relationship between Buddhism and science. At the same time they cast sidelights on conclusions drawn by Peter Harvey in a previous issue of this journal[2]. I shall therefore organise my comments under three headings along those lines.

The Nikāyas and Early Western Medicine

At one point in the texts[3] Gotama declares '. . .wearing my last body, incomparable physician and surgeon am I', with almost equal claims made elsewhere for those enlightened under his tutelage. The use of physical afflictions, particularly wounds, as metaphors for moral and spiritual defects is common, and the training is also compared to a purge[4]. Moreover, since *dukkha* embraces 'all the ills that flesh is heir to', those of the body are addressed in their own right. A complete discourse is given over to 'mindfulness of body' requiring its systematic observation in terms of the four elements and more detailed anatomy. Finally.

1   R. Dissanayake, 'Revising the Historical Dates of the Buddha', *The Middle Way* 70, 3 (1995), pp.177–80.

2   P. Harvey, 'Contemporary Characterisations of the "Philosophy" of Nikāyas Buddhism', BSR 12, 2 (1995), pp.109–33.

3   Itivuttaka 100.

4   A V 218.

THE VAIBHĀṢIKA IMPACT[*]

Bart Dessein

The Vaibhāṣikas, named after a *Vibhāṣa* commentary on the original Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma works, are often defined as the Sarvāstivāda orthodoxy (of Kaśmīra). 'Vaibhāṣika' is only one of many names one encounters in reference to the 'Sarvāstivādins'. Under the general name Sarvāstivāda, different sub-schools figure: the original Sarvāstivādins originating from Mathurā, the Kāśmīri Vaibhāṣikas, the Western Masters of Gandhāra and Bactria who are also referred to as Bahirdeśaka (Outsiders), Aparāntaka (Those living at the Western Border) and Pāścāttya (Westerners)[1]; and the Mūlasarvāstivādins. These names appear in a fairly strict chronological series[2]. In connection with the Sarvāstivādins, we further have to mention the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntikas. All sources agree on the fact that the term Sautrāntika appears later than the term Sarvāstivāda[3]. Of these names, the earlier ones (Bahirdeśaka, Aparāntaka, Pāścāttya) refer to a geographical location, while the later ones refer either to a textual type or means of exegesis (Vaibhāṣika, Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntika) or to a dogmatic standpoint (Mūlasarvāstivāda). This seems to substantiate the standpoint of Erich Frauwallner (*The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, Rome 1956) and Heinz Bechert (ed., *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, 2 vols, Göttingen 1985-87) concerning the criterion upon which different Buddhist schools have been formed: disciplinary matters have led to the rise of distinct sects (*nikāya*); dogmatic schools have then arisen later from within Vinaya sects. David Seyfort Ruegg, however, argued that dog-

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[*] This article is a slightly reworked and edited version of my lecture held at the XXIIth IABS Conference, Lausanne, 23-28 August 1999. Part of this paper had earlier been presented as a lecture at the same university, Section de langues et civilisations orientales, on 31 March 1998.

[1] See M.Van Velthem, trans. *Le Traité de la descente dans la profonde loi (Abhidharmāvatāraśāstra) de l'arhat Skandhila*, Louvain-la-neuve 1977, pp.vi-vii.

[2] See C. Willemen, B. Dessein, C. Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, Leiden 1998, p.19.

[3] See *ibid.*, p.106.

matic matters may also have given rise to different sects[4]. Also, different languages are suggested by Ruegg to have led to the rise of schools[5]. The question on the origin of sects and schools is thus obviously not easy to answer. When we focus on the Sarvāsti-vadins, a decision on the precise textual affiliation of a Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma text is further complicated by the mutual influences different schools and sub-schools had in the course of time. This is, e.g., most pronounced in the series of texts called 'Abhidharmahṛdaya' to which we will return later. It is further known that monks 'changed' philosophical schools. A notable example for our purpose is Vasubandhu who, at first an adherent of the Sarvāstivāda, is reported to have shifted to the Mahāyāna. Such transitions undoubtedly left their traces in the works these monks compiled. Translations (for the Sarvāstivāda this is essentially into Chinese) of original Indian texts further show evidence that the philosophical branch that was dominant at the time of translation influenced the latter[6]. Finally, what is by modern scholars identified as a sub-school or sub-branch may not have been considered as such at the actual time. This is evident from the way the traditional eighteen schools are listed in the various sources[7]. In the course of scientific research, many classifications of Sarvāstivāda works have been proposed[8], but

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[4] D.S. Ruegg, 'Über die Nikāyas der Śrāvakas und den Ursprung der philoso-phischen Schulen des Buddhismus nach den tibetischen Quellen', in Bechert, ed., *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit, op. cit.*, III 1, pp.111-26; here p.120: 'Die Quellen, die der Aufspaltung einem dogmatischen Ursprung zuschreiben, sind dennoch sämtlich in die Vinaya-Unterabteilung vom tibetischen bsTan 'gyur auf-genommen worden'.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp.116-17.

[6] See Willemen, Dessein, Cox, *op. cit.*, pp.77-8 and 89-92.

[7] See H. Kern, *Histoire du bouddhisme dans l'Inde* II, Paris 1903, p.481.

[8] J. Takakusu, 'On the Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvāstivādins', *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1904-5, pp.67-146; A. Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, Paris 1955 ; A.C. Banerjee, *Sarvāstivāda Literature*, Calcutta

none of these classifications can account for the existence of multiple versions (either Indian or Chinese or both) of one and the same text, nor for the divergence in authorship these works were attributed to. Moreover, the reason – although not only the Vaibhāṣikas possessed a *Vibhāṣā* literature – precisely why their *Vibhāṣā* became authoritative is not explained by these classifications.

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Until the time of Aśoka the Maurya, who reigned ca.270-ca.230 BCE[9], the spread of Buddhism had been limited to Central India. As is evident from the position and content of the Aśokan inscriptions, the religion was disseminated with the expansion of the Mauryan empire[10]. That a council was held in Pāṭaliputra, Aśoka's capital, in the first half of the second century AB[11], suggests that geographical expansion was instrumental in schisms in the community. Such phenomena would explain the geo-

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1957, 1979; C. Cox, *Disputed Dharmas – Early Buddhist Theories on Existence – An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra*, Tokyo 1995, to mention only a few.

[9] See E.Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the origins to the Śaka era* (trans S. Boin-Webb), Louvain-la-neuve 1988, p.216, n.1.

[10] See J. Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d'Aśoka*, Paris 1950, pp.152-3, for the inscriptions of Kauśāmbī, Sārnāth and Sāñcī; p.157 for the inscription of Rummindeï; p.158, for that at Nigālī Sāgar; and p.154 for that at Calcutta-Bairāṭ.

[11] AB = Anno buddhae. As dates for this council, there are four possibilities: The *Mahāprajñā-pāramitopadeśa* gives 100 AB (T 1509, 70a8), the *Samaya-bhedoparacanacakra* gives 116 AB (T 2032, 18a9; T 2033, 20a18), and the *Nikāyabhedavibhaṅgavyākhyā* by Bhavya gives 137 AB in the second list and 160 AB in the first list (Tanjur-Mdo XC, No.12). See also C.Prebish, 'A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils', *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXIII, 2, pp.239-54, here p.252. After studying these four dates, André Bareau, *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, Paris 1955, pp.88-9 and 108, favoured the date 137 AB. See also Willemen, Dessein, Cox, *op. cit.*, pp.44-8.

graphical references we find in the names of some Sarvāstivāda sub-schools. Whether this diffusion led to a different interpretation of the Vinaya rules, or of Abhidharmic questions, is a point of controversy between the sources of the Northern and Southern traditions. According to the opinion of the Northern tradition, the schism between the Mahāsāmghikas and Sthaviravādins was due to the doctrines (the five points) of a certain Mahādeva[12]. The *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* and the Sarvāstivāda *Mahāvibhāṣā* fiercely attack Mahādeva's view[13]. The Vinaya literature of various schools claims that it was more or less strict adherence to the precepts (the ten lax practices) that caused the schism[14]. The discussion is reported not to have been resolved, whereupon King Aśoka mediated and recognised the stance of the majority. This majority became the Mahāsāmghika school. The Mahāsāmghikas themselves indicate that they objected to the developments introduced into the Vinayapitaka by the Sthaviravādins[15]. A logical argument in favour of Vinaya matters that underlie the

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[12] T 1509, 78a19; T 2032, 18a9; T 2033, 18a19; Tanjur-Mdo XC, No.12. See also M. Hofinger, *Étude sur le concile de Vaiśālī,* Louvain 1946, p.173 ; Bareau, *Les premiers conciles, op.cit.,* pp.92 and 112 ; Prebish, *op.cit.,* pp.251-2. See also Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques, op. cit.,* p.33.

[13] T 2031, 15a15-23; T 2032, 18a9-14; T 2033, 21a15-25; *[Abhidharma-] mahāvibhāṣā[śāstra],* T 1545, 510c23-512a19.

[14] See *Mahāsāmghikavinaya,* T 1425, 231a29-b22; Pāli Vinaya, ed. H. Oldenberg, *Vinayapiṭakaṃ: II, Cullavagga,* PTS 1964, pp.294-8; I.B. Horner, trans, *The Book of the Discipline* V, London 1963, pp.407-14; *Dharma-guptakavinaya,* T 1428, 968c19-969c3; *Daśādhyāyavinaya,* T 1435, 450a28-29; *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya,* T 1451, 411c4-413c26.

[15] T 1425, 493a28-c22. See also Hofinger, *op. cit.,* p.173; Frauwallner, *op. cit.,* pp.9-10; Prebish, *op. cit.,* p.252. L.S. Cousins, 'The 'five points' and the origins of the Buddhist Schools', in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum* II, London 1991, pp.27-60, here pp.33-4, sees the Mahāsāmghikas as 'the conservative party which has preserved the original Vinaya unchanged against reformist efforts to create a reorganized and stricter version'. Concerning the etymological interpretation of the term 'Mahāsāmghika', see his p.34.

schism is that the Abhidharma literature of that moment belongs to what Collett Cox (*op. cit.*) described as the earliest Abhidharma works, i.e., Abhidharma works that resemble sūtras and do not yet show elements of sectarian alignment. In these early works we do not find marks of factional debate[16].

As they were rejected by the king, the Sthaviravādins are said to have moved to southern Kaśmīra[17]. Also the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, a work that belongs to a younger category of philosophical treatises – polemical texts that recognise sectarian alignments – claims that the 'Sthaviravādins' moved to Kaśmīra[18]. Since the *Mahāvibhāṣā* is a Kāśmīra work itself, the text seems to identify the Kāśmīri Sarvāstivādins with the Sthaviravādins. A clue to the solution of this problem may lie in the *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*. This work states that the Sthaviravādins split into the Mūlasthaviras and Sarvāstivādins[19], whereby the Mūlasthavira school supports Mahādeva's points and the Sarvāstivādins reject them. This statement may be an attempt to support the claim that the Sarvāstivādins in Kaśmīra are the orthodox branch of the Sthaviravādins. When the *Mahāvibhāṣā* claims that the Sthaviravādins moved to Kaśmīra – a Vaibhāṣika area – after the king decided against their opposition to the five points of Mahādeva,

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[16] For a relative chronology of Sarvāstivādin works, see E. Frauwallner, (tr. S.F. Kidd) *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems*, New York 1995, VIII: The Sarvāstivāda, pp.185-208. Also the observation by Lance Cousins (*op. cit.*, p.47) that 'The Vinaya of the Mahāsāṃghikas seems to define *abhidharma* as the ninefold *sūtrānta*' which 'suggests that early Mahāsāṃghikas (or some of them) may have rejected the *abhidharma* developments' is inter-esting in this respect.

[17] See Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya, op. cit.*, pp.13-14, 16, 20 and 22; A. Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism – from Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, Honolulu 1990, p.119. See also *Aśokarājāvadāna*, T 2042, 111b28-112b1, 116b1-10, 102b10-19.

[18] T 1545, 510c23-512a19.

[19] T 2031, 15b9-10; T 2033, 20b9-10.

the Kaśmīrī Vaibhāṣikas could claim that the legitimate stream of the Sthaviravāda, i.e., the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivāda, was in Kaś-mīra. For this purpose, the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins, when charting the various schools of the Sthaviravāda, split the latter into the two streams Mūlasthavira and Sarvāstivāda. When we accept Vinaya grounds as the cause of the first schism (the ten lax practices), it appears not to be impossible that the Vaibhāṣikas deliberately claimed that Mahādeva's five points were the cause of the schism in a need to reaffirm themselves. Although there is no agreement between the *Mahāvaṃsa*[20] and the *Dīpavaṃsa*[21] on the second council of Pāṭaliputra, supposedly held in 238 AB, it does appear that the major challengers of the Sthaviravādins under Tissa Moggaliputta (Maudgaliputra) were the Sarvāstivādins of Kātyāyanīputra[22]. In the council, Kātyāyanīputra and his supporters were declared to be wrong, whereupon one group of the Sarvāstivādins stayed in Magadha. Here, they somewhat later reappeared as a Buddhist school centred in Pāṭaliputra and Vaiśālī, while the other group is reported to have gone to convert Kaśmīra[23]. It is not without importance that this third Buddhist council is not mentioned in sources of the Northern tradition.

A people that has played an important role in the dissemination of Buddhism – and more precisely of Sarvāstivāda philosophy – from the Indian subcontinent to China, are the Yüeh-chih (Tocharians)[24]. Their political power was at its height

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[20] Mhv V, 280.

[21] Dīp VII, 37 and VII, 44.

[22] Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques, op. cit.*, pp.168-9.

[23] See Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p.6; Hirakawa, *op. cit.*, p.87.

[24] For the identification of the Yüeh-chih with the Tocharians, see G. Haloun, 'Zur Üe-Tṣi-Frage', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 91 (1937), pp.243-318, here 253-7; W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938, 1951 (repr. Chicago 1997), pp.295-7; A.K. Narain,

in the Kuṣāṇa empire that included Kaśmīra[25]. The Sarvāstivāda school of Buddhism thus flourished in this Northwestern region during the heyday of Kuṣāṇa power in the second century CE.

Under the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka (second century[26]), Buddhism took rapid steps towards the Mahāyāna, and a Buddhist council was held. It is also the period of the compilation of the already mentioned explanatory treatises (*vibhāṣā*) of which the Vaibhāṣika *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (T 1545) is the best known example[27]. The council of Kaśmīra appears to be a Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivāda council, concerned with the *Jñānaprasthāna* and its explanation. The *Aṣṭagrantha/Jñānaprasthāna* is the youngest of the seven Abhidharma works of the Sarvāstivāda school that became known as the Vaibhāṣika 'canonical' works[28]. It was

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'Indo-Europeans in Inner Asia', in D. Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge 1990, p.153.

[25] *Hou Han Shu*, Chapter 118, Lieh-chuan 78, 297d3-4. See also Narain, *op. cit.*, p.165.

[26] A. Maricq, 'The Date of Kaniṣka', in A.L. Basham (ed), *Papers on the Date of Kaniṣka*, Leiden 1968, pp.179-99, here p.190, gives 78 CE as date for Kaniṣka; A.K. Narain, 'The Date of Kaniṣka', pp.206-39 in the same volume, suggest the dates ca. 103-125 (p.221). See also F.R. Allchin, 'Archaeology and the Date of Kaniṣka: The Taxila Evidence', pp.4-34 of the same volume, here pp.30-1; G. Fussman, 'Nouvelles inscriptions Saka: ère de Kaniska', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 68 (1980), pp.1-43, here pp.29-31; *id.*, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans (II)', *ib.*, pp.45-58, here p.46; W. Posch, *Baktrien zwischen Griechen und Kuschan*, Wiesbaden 1995, p.101 ff.

[27] See Willemen, Dessein, Cox, *op. cit.*, pp.18 and 148-60.

[28] Yaśomitra gives the following enumeration (Abhidh-k-vy (= U. Wogihara, ed., *Sputārthābhidharmakośavyākhyā* of Yaśomitra, 2 vols, Tokyo 1971) 11, 24-29 and 25 ff.): *Jñānaprasthāna* by Kātyanīputra, *Prakaraṇapāda* by Vasumitra, *Vijñānakāya* by Devaśarman, *Dharmaskandha* by Śāriputra, *Prajñaptiśāstra* by Maudgalyāyana, *Dhātukāya* by Pūrṇa, *Saṃgītiparyāya* by Mahākausthila. See also Abhidh-k-vy, 9, 12-14 and 12,4 ff. The enumeration by the Tibetan historian Bu-ston (E. Obermiller, trans. *History of Buddhism by Bu-ston*, 2 parts,

compiled in approximately the first century BCE[29]. In his 'Life of
Vasubandhu', Paramārtha (500-569) writes that Kātyāyanīputra
compiled the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivāda school and
composed the *Aṣṭagrantha* in Kaśmīra[30], while Hsüan-tsang
(602-664) in his travel record, mentions that the *Jñānaprasthāna*
was written in the neighbourhood of Cīnavatī[31]. That the work was
written in Central India, and not the Northwest, is also mentioned
in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, where the work is called *Jñānaprasthāna*[32].
Two different translations into Chinese of this text are extant: one
translation was made in 383 by Saṃghadeva and Chu Fo-nien in
Ch'ang-an (T 1543), and the other was made by Hsüan-tsang
between 657 and 660 CE (T 1544). The first is called *Aṣṭagrantha*
(T 1543), the second *Jñānaprasthāna* (T 1544). This confirms

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Heidelberg 1931-32, 1, p.49) is *Dharmaskandha* by Śāriputra, *Prajñaptiśāstra* by
Maudgalyāyana, *Dhātukāya* by Pūrṇa, *Vijñānakāya* by Devakṣema, *Jñāna-
prasthāna* by Kātyāyana, *Prakaraṇapāda* by Vasumitra, *Saṃgītiparyāya* by
Mahākauṣṭhila. The Chinese order is again different: *Dharmaskandha* (T 1537)
by Mahāmaudgalyāyana, *Prajñaptiśāstra* (T 1538) (no author mentioned),
Dhātukāya (T 1540) by Vasumitra, *Vijñānakāya* (T 1539) by Devaśarman,
Jñānaprasthāna (T 1543/1544) by Kātyāyanīputra, *Prakaraṇapāda* (T 1541/
1542) by Vasumitra and *Saṃgītiparyāya* (T 1536) by Śāriputra.

[29] Fragments of the text have been discovered in Bāmiyān and Kuča; see S.
Lévi, 'Note sur des manuscrits provenant de Bāmiyān (Afghanistan) et de
Gilgit (Cachemire)', *Journal Asiatique* CCXX (1932), pp.1-45; B. Pauly, 'Frag-
ments sanskrits de Haute Asie (Mission Pelliot) (II)', JA CCXLVIII (1960),
pp.509-19. Identification of the fragments by P. Demiéville, 'Un fragment
sanskrit de l'Abhidharma des Sarvāstivādin', JA CCXLIX (1961), pp.461-5.

[30] *P'o-sou-p'an-tou Fa-shih Chuan* T 2049, 189a1-6. See also T. Watters, *On
Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, 2 vols, London 1904, 1, p.294.

[31] *Ta T'ang Hsi-yü Chi*, T 2087, 889b28-c4. See also J. Takakusu, *op. cit.*, pp.84-
5.

[32] T 1545, 21c29. See also L. de La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa de
Vasubandhu*, 6 vols, Brussels 1923-31 (repr. 1971), 2, p.147, n.4.

Paramārtha's statement that the work has two names[33]. As Paramārtha lived prior to Hsüan-tsang, this means that there are not only two Chinese versions of the text, but also two Indian ones: an *Aṣṭagrantha, translated 383 CE and a Jñānaprasthāna, translated 657-660. Having examined the two Indian versions, Ryogen Fukuhara[34] concluded that the transliterations in the *Aṣṭagrantha indicate that the work is of Gandhāran origin, while the Jñānaprasthāna is a Kāśmīra Vaibhāṣika recension[35]. That Paramārtha situates the compilation of the *Aṣṭagrantha in Kaśmīra, while Hsüan-tsang and the *Mahāvibhāṣā locate the compilation of the Jñānaprasthāna in Central India, may then have to be explained as follows: Kātyāyanīputra wrote his *Aṣṭagrantha in Central India before the Sarvāstivāda school began to flourish in Kaśmīra. As is also apparent in the accounts of the first council of Pāṭaliputra, the Kāśmīrī Sarvāstivādins wanted to present themselves as true heirs of the doctrine. Therefore, when re-editing the *Aṣṭagrantha as the Jñānaprasthāna, they kept referring to the work as *Aṣṭagrantha and mentioned Kaśmīra as its place of origin (Paramārtha's account) or, for the same reason, referred to the work as the Jñānaprasthāna of Central India. The Kāśmīrī Vaibhāṣikas composed their *Mahāvibhāṣā based on the Jñānaprasthāna. This means that the latter was the version of the work recognised in Kaśmīra[36].

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[33] T 2049, 189a5-9, See also J. Takakusu, 'The Life of Vasubandhu by Paramārtha', T'oung Pao, series II, 5 (1904), pp.269-96, here pp.276-7; and id., 'On the Abhidharma Literature...', op. cit., p.82.

[34] R. Fukuhara, Jōjitsuron no Kenkyū, Kyoto 1969, pp.218-19.

[35] See also R.E. Buswell and P.S. Jaini, 'The Development of Abhidharma Philosophy', in K. Potter (ed.), Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Vol. VII: Abhidharma Buddhism to 150 A.D., Delhi 1996, pp.73-119, here p.108.

[36] See P. Demiéville, 'L'Origine des Sectes Bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha', Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques I (1931-2), pp.15-64, here pp.22-3; E. Frauwallner, Die Enstehung der buddhistischen Systeme, Göttingen 1971, p.71 ; La Vallée Poussin, op. cit., I, p.xxix ; Willemen, Dessein, Cox, op. cit., pp.117-20.

Consequently, the followers of Kātyāyanīputra saw this latter work as pre-eminent over other works. They even called it a body (*śarīra*), while the other works were called limbs (*pāda*). In the case of the Vaibhāṣikas, the formation of a (sub-)school clearly shows this to be a philosophical, no longer disciplinary, matter.

A parallel situation may be true for the *Prakaraṇapāda*. Like the *Aṣṭagrantha*, the *Prakaraṇapāda* was also called 'Prakaraṇa-grantha' [37], and as with the *Aṣṭagrantha/Jñānaprasthāna*, there are also two Chinese translations of this work, by Guṇabhadra and Bodhiyaśas, 435-443 CE (T 1541), and by Hsüan-tsang in 659 (T 1542). It is not impossible that the work was first called *Prakaraṇagrantha* (cf. *Aṣṭagrantha*), and later, when recognised as one of the six *pāda*-treatises by the Kāśmīri Sarvāstivādins, was renamed *Prakaraṇapāda*.

Here, we reach the problem of the impact of the 'canonicity' of the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma. From the outset, Buddhist councils played an important role in the canonisation of texts. This is already evident from the first council that, tradition claims, was held immediately after the decease of the Buddha, and at which, still according to tradition, Ānanda is said to have recited the Sūtra texts and Upāli the Vinaya texts. The importance of this alleged first council is that it was needed to justify the existence of a second council, held in Vaiśālī. The first one also serves to project the authenticity of texts back in time, to the lifetime of the Buddha.

Although tradition fixed the early Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma Canon at seven texts, it is untrue that during the early period only these texts were composed or that they were seen as a canonical collection from the outset. A postface to fascicle 24 of the *Aṣṭa-granthaśāstra*, written in 379 CE, gives the earliest dated reference to a set of seven texts. A reference to a 'six part Abhidharma' is

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[37] La Vallée Poussin, *op. cit.*, I, p.xxxii.

further found in translations by Kumārajīva (died 413). Yaśo-mitra's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* gives the first listing of seven: the *Jñānaprasthāna* is the body (*śarīra*) and the six texts that constitute its feet (*ṣatpāda*) are the *Prakaraṇapāda*, *Vijñānakāya*, *Dharmaskandha*, *Prajñaptiśāstra*, *Dhātukāya* and *Saṃgītiparyāya*. All this implies that the so-called *Ṣatpādābhi-dharma* is actually a Vaibhāṣika composition, recognising six treatises as the 'feet' (*pāda*), while the *Jñānaprasthāna* itself became known as the 'body' (*śarīra*) or main text[38]. This canoni-sation made the Vaibhāṣikas appear to be 'orthodox' Sarvāsti-vādins. In this respect it is to be noted that, e.g., the **Mahāvibhāṣā* argues that the Abhidharma is the Buddha's teaching[39].

As the *Jñānaprasthāna* was promoted as the 'body' of the seven works by the Kaśmīri Vaibhāṣikas, their evident recognition of the *Ṣatpādābhidharma* left the Western masters, predecessors of the later Sautrāntikas, with śāstras which did not have a 'canonical' status. The importance of some 'canonicity' was – as outlined above – evident from the councils of Rājagṛha and Vaiśālī. The Western masters found the 'solution' to this problem by returning to sūtra-like philosophical treatises. Thus, they emphasised the **Abhidharmahṛdaya* (T 1550), a work by the Bactrian Dharma-śreṣṭhin that is similar in purpose and that, according to Erich Frauwallner, is probably older than the *Jñānaprasthāna*[40]. The **Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* served as a basis for the compilation of Upaśānta's **Abhidharmahṛdaya* (T 1551), Dharmatrāta's **Saṃ-yuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (T 1552) and, eventually, Vasubandhu's Sautrāntika *Abhidharmakośa* (T 1558/1559). As the oldest Abhi-

[38] See also Takakusu, 'On the Abhidharma Literature...', *op. cit.*, p.74.

[39] T 1545, 1a8-c29. See also Cox, *op. cit.*, p.23.

[40] Frauwallner, *Die Entstehung...*, *op. cit.*, p.71: 'Der Abhidharmasāraḥ schließ-lich ist die älteste Dogmatik der Sarvāstivādaḥ. In ihm ist das Wertvollste, was in der Zeit des alten Abhidharma an Lehren geschaffen worden war, zu einem großen Gebäude vereinigt'. See also *[Abhidharma]vibhāṣā[śāstra]*, T 1546, 1b11 ff.

dharma works appear as collections of *kārikās* which are then
explained, the series based on Dharmaśreṣṭhin's *Abhidharma-
hṛdaya* and culminating in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* are
also constituted of stanzas which are explained in a prose com-
mentary. It is to be noticed that the *Hṛdaya*-works were often
called *'ching'* or *'lun-ching'*, i.e. sūtra[41].

Having drawn our attention to Bactria and Gandhāra, we are
confronted with the problem of the Sautrāntikas (Dārṣṭāntikas)
and Mūlasarvāstivādins[42]. Sources from the Northwest place the
origin of the Sautrāntikas in the fourth century after the Buddha's
Parinirvāṇa[43], i.e. about the time of Kuṣāṇa (and Vaibhāṣika)
dominance. Kumāralāta is traditionally mentioned as the founder
of the Dārṣṭāntikas, but modern scholarship does not agree on the
dates of Kumāralāta, opinions varying from 100 years after the

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[41] Upaśānta's **Abhidharmahṛdaya* e.g. is called *Fa-sheng A-p'i-t'an Hsin Lun
Ching* in the *Ch'u San-tsang Chi Chi*, T2145, 543c19, 621a5, 695c15, 720b12;
Chen-yüan Hsin-ting Shih Chiao Mu-lu, T 2157, 954b14, 1043c26; in the Taishō
Index Vol.1, p.417; and in the work itself (T 1551, 833c3-6). Ghoṣaka's **Abhi-
dharmāmṛtarasaśāstra* (T 1553) is called *Kan-lu-wei Ching* in T 2145, 32b6 and
in the *Ta T'ang Nei-tien Lu*, T 2149, 231a19.

[42] On the Dārṣṭāntikas-Sautrāntikas, see Cox, *op. cit.*, p.40; See also J.
Przyluski, 'Dārṣṭāntika, Sautrāntika and Sarvāstivāda', in *Indian Historical
Quarterly* 16 (1940), pp.246-54, here p.247.

[43] T 2032, 18b9; *Mañjuśrīparipṛcchā*, T 468, 501a19-b25 (esp. 501b23-24); first
list of Bhavya (see W.W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha and the Early
History of His Order*, London 1884. p.182); M. Walleser, *Die Sekten des alten
Buddhismus*, Heidelberg 1927, pp.78-9; A. Bareau, 'Trois traités sur les sectes
bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra' , *Journal Asiatique* CCXLIV (1956),
pp.167-91, here p.168.

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Buddha's Parinirvāṇa[44] to the third century CE[45]. In favour of an
early date for Kumāralāta is that it is natural that the Dārṣṭāntika-
Sautrāntikas would refer to a master who lived before or at the
same time as the compilation of the Vaibhāṣika *Jñānaprasthāna*,
i.e. a master who lived prior to the moment of formation of the
Vaibhāṣika 'orthodoxy'. Tradition further sees Kumāralāta as the
teacher of both Harivarman and Śrīlāta. The latter was the direct
teacher of the Sautrāntika Vasubandhu[46]. An early date for
Kumāralāta explains why he is referred to as the *'mūlācārya'* (in
contradistinction to the *'ācārya'*) of the Dārṣṭāntika-Sautrāntikas:
he was not necessarily the immediate teacher of Śrīlāta. In favour
of a later date for Kumāralāta is the fact that he is mentioned with
Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. However, this
would still place Kumāralāta no later than the early second
century CE, i.e. in the period of Kuṣāṇa power. It is very likely that
the Sautrāntikas only felt the need to start to refer to a/their
'mūlā-cārya' (and call themselves 'Sautrāntika') after the
Vaibhāṣikas had organised themselves as 'Vaibhāṣika', i..e. as the
orthodoxy in Kāśmīra.

Because of their dominance, Vaibhāṣika ideas were influencing
the Gandhāran works. This is evident in the increase of Vaibhā-
ṣika positions in Upaśānta's **Abhidharmahṛdaya* (ca. 300 CE[47])

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[44] See M. Hahn, 'Vorläufige Überlegungen zur Schulzugehörigkeit einiger
buddhistischen Dichter' in Bechert (ed.), *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit. . ., op.cit.*,
pp.239-57, here pp.255-6.

[45] J. Katō. 'Notes sur les deux maîtres bouddhiques Kumāralāta et Śrīlāta', in
Indianisme et Bouddhisme : Mélanges offerts à Mgr. Étienne Lamotte,
Louvain-la-neuve 1980, pp.197-213; *id., Kyōryōbu no Kenkyū,* Tokyo 1989,
p.37 ff.

[46] Frauwallner, *Die Enstehung. . ., op. cit.,* p.103; Kato, *Kyōryōbu no Kenkyū,
op. cit.,* pp.58 ff; Cox, *op. cit.,* p.41.

[47] In Upaśānta's work, T 1551, 841c17, 855a28 and 855 c27, the masters of the
Vibhāṣā are referred to. Taiken Kimura (*Kimura Taiken Zenshū, IV: Abidatsu-*

and in Dharmatrāta's *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (beginning of fourth century)[48].

The *Saṃyuktabhidharmahṛdaya* refers to the following schools: Dārṣṭāntikas (pp.895c22, 903b6-7, 944a7), Dharmaguptakas (p.962a19-20), Vātsīputrīyas (pp.903b5, 962a19), the Kāśmīri (p.872-c28), and the Vaibhāṣikas (pp.882a18, 892a2). The work disagrees with the opinion attributed to the Dharmaguptakas. In one instance, the work disagrees with the Vātsīputrīyas and in another instance agrees with it. This seems to indicate that a strict Vinaya differentiation (Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, Vātsīputrīya) does not necessarily indicate an equally strict Abhidharmic differentiation. In view of our above-mentioned sketch, it may be of no surprise that the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* further disagrees with the Kāśmīra opinion and with one of the theses attributed to the Vaibhāṣikas. That the work does not agree with the Dārṣṭāntika thesis and with a second Vaibhāṣika thesis should – in view of what was outlined above – be explained as an instance of Vaibhāṣika influence on Gandhāran works. As we know that 'Dārṣṭāntika' is a pejorative term, it is equally possible that Dharmatrāta refers to some other Sarvāstivāda sub-group here.

It must have been the decline of Kuṣāṇa and Vaibhāṣika power that enabled Vasubandhu (ca.400-480)[49] to take a clear Sau-

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maron no kenkyū, Tokyo 1974), p.230, states that Upaśānta lived one generation prior to Dharmatrāta, author of the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya*. See also Watanabe, Mizuno, Oishi, tr. *Abidonshinronkyō* (1932) vol.21, p.124, and W.R. Ryose, 'The Position of the Abhidharmahṛdaya in the Historical Development of Sarvāstivāda Thought' in *Abhidharma Research Institute* 5, (Kyoto 1986), pp.1-16, here p.6.

[48] See my *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya. Heart of Scholasticism with Miscellaneous Additions*, 3 vols, Delhi 1999.

[49] On the discussion of one or two Vasubandhus and of a fourth or fifth century life-time of Vasubandhu, see Takakusu, 'Life of Vasubandhu...', *op.cit.*, pp.269-96; E. Frauwallner, *On the Date of the Buddhist Master of the*

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trāntika standpoint against the Vaibhāṣikas. The Gandhāra-Sautrāntika connection explains why, after the translation of the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* by Saṃghavarman into Chinese in 434 CE (the fourth of four translations of the work into Chinese[50]) had given rise to an 'Abhidharma School' in China, after the translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* in 565 CE, the '*Kośa* School' supplanted the 'Abhidharma School' and the *Abhidharmakośa* replaced the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya*.

From a doctrinal viewpoint, Hsüan-tsang's translation of the *Prakaraṇapāda*[51] shows the Mūlasarvāstivāda viewpoint. This also brings the Mūlasarvāstivādins in close connection with the seven early canonical works. While both translations of the *Prakaraṇapāda* show the old Sarvāstivāda viewpoint, for Guṇabhadra and Bodhiyaśas this appears to be Sautrāntika; for Hsüan-tsang Mūlasarvāstivāda. It should further be noticed that the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition does not mention the Sautrāntikas[52]. This may also explain why, while the oldest Chinese tradition (fifth century) knows five Vinaya schools (Sarvāstivādins, Dharmaguptakas, Kāśyapīyas, Mahīśāsakas and Mahāsāṃghikas), in the seventh century, only four are differentiated: Ārya-Mahā-

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Law, Rome 1951; La Vallée Poussin, *op. cit.*, I, pp.xxiv-xxviii; P. Pradhan (ed.), *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, Patna 1975, pp.13-14; S. Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*, Delhi 1984, 1998, pp.7-11; M. Mejor, 'The Problem of two Vasubandhus Reconsidered', in *Indologica Taurinensia* XV-XVI (1989-90), pp.175-83; L. Schmithausen, 'A Note on Vasubandhu and the Laṅkāvatārasūtra', in *Asiatische Studien* XLVI-1 (1992), pp.392-7, here pp.396-7.

[50] A translation of 16 volumes by Saṃghadeva, most likely, however, not the work of Dharmatrāta, is dated 385-97; a translation in 13 volumes by Fa-hsien and Buddhabhadra is dated 418; a translation in 13 volumes by Īśvara and Guṇavarman is dated 426; and the fourth translation by Saṃghavarman is dated 434.

[51] [*Abhidharma*]*prakaraṇapāda*[*śāstra*], T 1542, 693c20-21.

[52] See Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques...*, *op. cit.*, p.24.

sāmghika, Ārya-Sthavira, Ārya-(Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda and Ārya-Sammatīya (Hsüan-tsang and I-ching)[53].

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After the Sarvāstivāda school originated on – most likely – Vinaya grounds, its development took two philosophical-dogmatic directions: one was situated in Kaśmīra, where the seven Abhidharma works (i.e. with the inclusion of the *Jñānaprasthāna*) were put together. These Vaibhāṣikas became the dominant Sarvāstivāda sub-group and Vaibhāṣika viewpoints came to be considered as 'orthodox'. The second direction was situated in places such as Bactria and Gandhāra where, modelled on the **Abhidharmahṛdaya*, a Bactrian compendium of Sarvāstivāda philosophy, a series of works called **Abhidharmahṛdaya* were compiled. The Kaśmīri orthodoxy spread to the bordering regions and influenced Gandhāran works. This is revealed in the two later *Hṛdaya* treatises. This growing influence led to a reaction by those Sarvāstivādins who had remained conservative and who referred to themselves as Sautrāntikas (and were called Dārṣṭāntikas by their opponents). The major work of this period is Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*. When the Vaibhāṣika doctrinal supremacy disappeared, the original non-Kaśmīri Sarvāstivādins renamed themselves as Mūlasarvāstivādins. This explains why Mūlasarvāstivāda texts do not refer to the Sautrāntikas, but show analogous doctrinal positions. The Mūlasarvāstivādins became the dominant group in the seventh to ninth centuries, a period in which their Vinaya was also finalised[54]. Sarvāstivāda history is thus shown to have originated on Vinaya grounds, to have been further decimated on philosophical matters and to have known a philosophical restoration that was backed and followed by a Vinaya renaissance.

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[53] See Ruegg, *op. cit.*, pp.118-19.

[54] See A. Heirman, 'Vinaya: perpetuum mobile', *Asiatische Studien* LIII, 4, 1999, pp.849-71.

A WHISPER IN THE SILENCE:
NUNS BEFORE MAHĀPAJĀPATĪ?[*]

Liz Williams

The story in the *Cullavagga* 10 of the ordination of women into the monastic Sangha is accepted by scholars and monastics, both ancient and modern, as evidence for the Buddha's reluctance, or at least hesitation, to accept women as fully ordained bhikkuṇīs. However, I argue that there is textual evidence to support the idea that there may have been bhikkhuṇīs in existence before the request for ordination by Mahāpajāpatī, and that there is evidence in the *Therīgāthā* to suggest that bhikkhuṇīs were sometimes ordained by the Buddha in much the same way as bhikkhus, by the use of the formula, *'ehi bhikkhuṇī'*. What I am suggesting is that the established argument, that the Buddha was reluctant to ordain women, is flawed, and therefore one aspect of the basis for the exclusion of women from the fully ordained monastic Sangha is weak and without substance.

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So, what is the evidence on which the Buddha's alleged reluctance is based? The most commonly quoted explanation given by monks and scholars[1] is that the Buddha initially refused and that only after the intervention of Ānanda did he relent and allow women the opportunity to follow the holy life: moreover, this was only on condition that Mahāpajāpatī and all who followed her accept the eight weighty rules (*garudhammas*) which would have the effect of subordinating them to the bhikkhus. The ordination story is still recounted in universities and monasteries, where the current exclusion of women from the fully ordained Theravādin Sangha is being justified as acceptable. If the Buddha was reluctant to ordain women, then there is some justification for their exclusion. So ingrained is this interpretation of the text (Vin.II.253) that scholars of Buddhism, ancient and modern, male and female,

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[*] Abstracted from an uncompleted Ph.D. dissertation 'Women's Ordination in Theravāda Buddhism: Ancient Evidence and Modern Debates'.

[1] Bhikkhu Khantipālo, *Banner of the Arahants*, Kandy 1979, p.133; Rita Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy, A Feminist History, Analysis and Reconstruction of Buddhism*, Albany, NY 1993, p.221.

Buddhist and non-Buddhist, continually repeat the story as Buddhist teaching. Even though many of these scholars are fully conversant with the original texts and must therefore be familiar with the canonical tradition of repeating a request three times before being accepted, they seem unable or unwilling to acknowledge the Buddha's egalitarian principles, as seen for example in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (D.II,195). In this Sutta, perhaps the most comprehensive exposition of fundamental Buddhist teachings, the Buddha emphatically tells Māra that he will not enter Parinibbāna until all four classes of disciple are well-versed in the teachings and can teach them to others. This includes bhikkhunīs as well as laywomen and was stated to have been said shortly after the Buddha's enlightenment and then repeated three months before his final Nibbāna. This would imply then that the Buddha knew he would ordain women as soon as he had attained liberation.

'Evil One, I will not take final Nibbāna till I have nuns and female disciples who are accomplished . . .'[2].

Moreover in the *Dakkhiṇavibhaṅga Sutta*, the Exposition of Offerings in the Majjhima Nikāya (M.II.253), there is evidence that Mahāpajāpatī may not have been the first nun. In this sutta, the latter approaches the Buddha and requests him to accept a pair of new cloths, which she has spun and woven especially for him. The Buddha refuses them, saying,

'Give it to the Sangha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Sangha, the offering will be made both to me and to the Sangha'.

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[2]   *Na tāvāham pāpima parinibbāyissami yāva me bhikkhuṇiyo na sāvikā bhavissanti viyatā vinītā. . pe. . .* (D.II.105). The English version is taken from Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, Boston 1995 (first published as *Thus have I Heard* in 1987), p.246.

She repeats her request for a second, and a third time, after which, following the established pattern[3], the Buddha refuses three times. At this point in the *Dakkhiṇavibhaṅga Sutta*[4], Ānanda intervenes on her behalf, just as he does in *Cullavagga* 10 (Vin.II.254), the ordination story. He reminds the Buddha of how helpful Mahāpajāpatī has been to him. She was his nurse and foster-mother and suckled him when his own mother died.

Ānanda then elucidates Mahāpajāpatī's debt to the Buddha, in that it is because of him that she keeps the five precepts. This clearly implies that this is meant to have taken place before she was part of the Sangha, members of which adhered to ten precepts for novices, and many more for those who had taken higher ordination. Although she is thus depicted as a lay person, it is also obvious that she is already a stream-enterer. Ānanda says,

'It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī possesses perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and that she possesses the virtues loved by the Noble Ones' (M II.254).

These are the four factors of stream-entry, so the text intends to convey that Mahāpajāpatī has already attained this level of spiritual development, as had many laymen and laywomen in the Suttas. Later in the text of the *Dakkhiṇavibhaṅga Sutta* (M.II. 255), the Buddha expounds the fourteen kinds of personal offerings, then the seven kinds of offering to the Sangha. He gives the descending order of karmic fruitfulness (*puñña*) accrued from

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[3] A layman requests the 'going forth' three times, a sāmaṇera requesting the higher ordination (*upasampadā*) asks three times, lay people request the precepts three times; therefore to request something three times is obviously not a demonstration of reluctance but a recognised canonical tradition, not peculiar to Mahāpajāpatī's desire for women to 'go forth'.

[4] All subsequent sutta references are taken from Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, Boston 1995.

gifts to:

Both Sanghas with the Buddha at the head,
Both Sanghas after the death of the Buddha,
The Order of bhikkhus,
The Order of bhikkhunīs,
A given number of bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs,
A given number of bhikkhus,
A given number of bhikkhunīs.

If she is still a lay person, as has already been demonstrated by the fact that she adheres only to five precepts, then, if the ordination story is accurate, there would be no bhikkhunīs in existence. It would seem then that this is evidence of the existence of bhikkhunīs *before* Mahāpajāpatī requested the going forth. The only other explanation is that this sutta may be an assimilation of one story with another. *Cullavagga* 10, then, looks as if it may have been added on by later compilers of the texts. Unlike bhikkhus, whose admission to the Order precedes all other rules specific to them in the text order as we have it, bhikkhunīs appear throughout the *Vinaya* prior to the story of their admission. Certain rules are also laid down for bhikkhunīs *before* any transgression takes place, which is another inconsistency.

There would appear to be a general reluctance to acknowledge that the Buddha elevated women from the socially constructed second class roles that were thought appropriate for them. Surely, one of the qualities of an enlightened being is that he can see beyond human prejudice. Why then do Buddhists, who see the Buddha as the ultimate paradigm of spiritual and ethical action, continually over-look and deny this aspect of his enlightenment?

In the *Therīgāthā* commentary[5], most of the nuns refer in some way to their ordination. Of the seventy-three verses, twenty-four

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[5]   William Pruitt (tr.) *The Commentary on the Verses of the Therīs (Therī-gāthā-Atthakathā Paramattadīpanī VI)* by Ācarya Dhammapāla, PTS, 1998.

are ascribed to nuns who state that they went to the monastery of the bhikkhunīs for their ordination. Twenty-two refer to 'going forth' in the presence of Mahāpajāpati. Some refer to hearing the Buddha teach, and then being instructed by him to go to the residence of the bhikkhunīs to be ordained. Only two, namely Vaddha-Mātā (ThigA 171) and Ambapālī (ThigA 207) refer to hearing the Dhamma in the presence of a bhikkhu, this being, on both occasions, their son. None refers to receiving the *upasampadā* from bhikkhus. Although an argument from silence cannot be taken as substantial evidence, in the compilation of seventy-three accounts, the law of averages would suggest that at least a few would refer to bhikkhus if indeed these were needed at the ordination of nuns, as suggested in *Cullavagga* 10. There is, however, a whisper in the silence.

The first account in the *Therīgāthā*, that of a certain bhikkhunī of Name Unknown (Thig. 1), the bhikkhunī describes her attainment of the state of Non-returner while still a laywoman. She is then taken to Mahāpajāpatī by her husband, who says,

'Let the reverend Sisters give her ordination. And Pajāpatī did so'[6].

This is worded similarly by Dhammapāla's commentary on Thig, a translation of which has recently been published by the Pali Text Society, which states:

'Like the lay disciple Visakhā for [his wife] Dhammadinā, he led her with great ceremony into the presence of Mahā-pajāpatī and said, "O noble lady [please] give the going forth [to this woman]'. Then Mahā-pajāpatī Gotamī had her go forth and take full ordination'[7].

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[6]   Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids and K.R. Norman, *Poems of the Early Buddhist Nuns (Psalms of the Sisters)* Revised Version, (*Elders Verses* II) Revised Version, Pali Text Society, 1997, p.7.

[7]   ThigA 6. Pruitt, *op. cit.*, p.10.

The bhikkhunī Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, an ex-Jain, in both Norman and Rhys Davids' translations of Thig, verse 109, refers to her ordination as being only by the Buddha himself.

'Low on my knees I worshipped with both hands
Adoring. "Come Bhaddā!" the Master said.
Thereby to me was ordination given'[8]
and
'Having bent the knee, having paid homage to him,
I stood with cupped hands face to face with him,
"Come Bhaddā!" he said to me; that was my ordination'[9].

Dhammapāla's commentary elaborates on this verse as:
'Come Bhaddā! Go to the residence of the bhikkhunīs, and in the presence of the bhikkhunīs go forth and be fully ordained'[10].

Even here, there is no reference to double ordination. Dhamma pāla then goes to extreme lengths to explain that there is no '*Ehi bhikkhunī*' ordination equivalent to that for bhikkhus. His explanation appears to be merely a denial of something he is not comfortable with, that is, that the Buddha ordained women in the same way as men, implying an equivalent status to men. His opinion is that,
On still other occasions [something] is mentioned that is not possible, or that does not exist[11].

He also explains away the inclusion of 'Come bhikkhunī' in the *Bhikkhunī-Vibhaṅga* (Vin.IV.214) by saying that
It is not an expression that makes clear the independent existence of full ordination of bhikkhunīs by [the formula] 'Come bhikkhunī' because there are no bhikkhunīs [admitted to] full

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[8] Rhys Davis, *op. cit.*, p.154.

[9] Norman, *op. cit.*, p.182.

[10] Pruitt, *op. cit.*, p.106.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.380.

ordination in this way[12].

This is merely a circular argument which adds nothing in the way of evidence or reasoning to support his contention. I would argue that the passage on Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā has just demonstrated that bhikkhunīs were indeed sometimes admitted to full ordination in this way, just as bhikkhus were sometimes admitted by the formula 'Come Bhikkhu!'

Dhammapāla is thought to have lived in South India in the sixth century CE, so his commentary dates from almost a millennium after the time of the Buddha. His views of and attitude towards women are obviously coloured by the socio-historical context in which he was writing. Blackstone[13], in discussing the attitude of disgust and disapproval of the body and its functions in the *Therī/Theragāthā*, recognises that 'those bodies that are of an unspecified sex are designated female by the commentary' (p.64).

Thus, even from the earliest days of the monastic Sangha, shortly after the decease of the Buddha, and for centuries later, women were denied the status, respect and recognition that was acknowledged by the Buddha. The same wariness and fear of women's achievements has filtered down through the centuries to the present day, and is still reflected in the lack of opportunity for women to realise their aspirations and to offer a significant and valuable contribution to the Theravādin monastic Sangha.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p.379.

[13] For a discussion of attitudes to the body in the Therī/Theragāthā; see Kathryn Blackstone, *Women in the Footsteps of the Buddha; Struggle for Liberation in the Therīgāthā*, Richmond, Surrey 1998.

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STRUCTURE, STRATEGY AND SELF IN THE FABRICATION OF CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: Neurophysiological and psychological evidence require us to see perception, the 'fabrication of (conscious) experience', as a process in time. Some of the elapsed time between the onset of stimulation and the appearance of a conscious image is accounted for by considerations of neural hardware. Cognitive science conventionally assumes that these *structural* factors are sufficient to account for the delay. However I argue in this paper that the human information processing system may interpose an additional *strategic* delay that allows for processes of checking and editing the developing 'sketch' or 'draft', so that elements that might threaten an underlying *self system* can be massaged or deleted. This cognitive model parallels that which is found in the Buddhist *Abhidhamma*, and improves upon the traditional, canonical formulation. Mindfulness meditation can be seen as a process of 'attentional retraining', in which the strategic delay is reduced through practice, and self-related assumptions, which had previously been dissolved in or pre-supposed by conscious experience, become crystallized out and capable of being problematized.

There is now abundant evidence for the existence of perception without conscious awareness in normal adults. Studies of subliminal perception and 'perceptual defence' (Dixon, 1981) and of the ability of unconsciously detected events to bias or prime the interpretation of subsequent, consciously perceived stimuli (e.g. Marcel, 1983) are well documented. Bornstein and Pittman (1992), Velmans (1991) and others have provided comprehensive and convincing reviews of a wide range of such studies. In the light of these demonstrations, two questions concerning the nature of consciousness present themselves. First, why, and how, is it that certain stimulus events result in conscious experience while others do not? And secondly, is the answer to the first question to be found solely in the hardware specification of the human brain–mind — in its intrinsic computational properties — or is there, in addition, an influence of strategic processing 'habits'? In this paper I shall argue for a positive answer to this second question, and explore the involvement of the 'self system', represented as a processing module comprising culture- and person-specific belief and desire systems, in the fabrication of conscious experience. I shall suggest that various forms of 'attentional retraining', such as mindfulness meditation, serve to alter the self-related strategic processing habits that underpin consciousness.

Neurochronology: Perception in Time

If we start from the assumption that consciousness emerges, in each moment, out of an intricate web of cognitive processes which are themselves largely or wholly unconscious, then we are led at once to a view of perception as a complex activity that takes place *in time*. Both because we are unaware of these behind-the-scenes activities, and because they happen, usually, very fast, we are prone, in our 'folk psychological' understanding of perception, to treat it as virtually instantaneous, and as 'receptive' rather than 'productive' — as if human perception were a biological analogue of a camcorder. It can take a significant intellectual effort to break through this 'naive realist' assumption, and to see conscious experience as the outcome or the culmination of a rapid, largely parallel mass of processing, yet, as I intend to demonstrate, we cannot begin to understand why

conscious experience is as it is unless we do so.[1] Experimental work on perception, as well as neuroscientific analyses of cerebral cortical functioning, make it clear just how much can happen in 100ms — a tenth of a second. While intriguing visual phenomena, such as 'embedded figures', or the 'Magic Eye' depth illusions, can give a feel for perception as a temporal process by dramatically slowing it down.

The temporal character of perception is normally masked, also, by its continuity: each moment's consciousness appears to unfold seamlessly from the previous moment — indeed we do not 'see' a succession of moments at all, just as we do not see the individual frames of a movie. Yet if we take the slightly unusual example of perception starting more-or-less 'from scratch', we can unpack its time-dependent nature more easily. We might imagine someone sitting in front of a computer screen, unaware of what the next display will be. Or — an event I took part in the other day — a surprise birthday party in which Pete, the 'Birthday Boy', was blindfolded and carried silently into a room that had been prepared as a 'pleasure dome', with a giant bed covered with a silk awning (an old orange and white parachute) and ringed with flowers — and with all Pete's female friends dressed voluptuously as his concubines, and equipped with large makeshift fans. We laid him on the bed and took the blindfold off. His 'double-take', followed by the gales of laughter, attested well to the way in which perception is retarded when deprived of the contextual clues that allow the unfolding of conscious experience to be anticipated.

Under such conditions we might summarise a fairly standard cognitive view of perception (e.g. Bruce and Green, 1985; Gregory, 1990) as follows. The brain–mind is represented by a standard 'neural net' (or rather a loosely interconnected collection of semi-autonomous sub-nets) that mediates between exterosensory systems (the 'special senses'), the interoceptive systems that sense body posture and need-states, and the neuromuscular effector systems (Rumelhart, McClelland et al., 1986). The pattern of connections in the network, and the amount of neural activation required to cross each of its junctions (the 'weights'), represent the scenarios, concepts and associations that have been extracted from previous experience. While on top of this 'structural' picture is overlaid a constantly varying pattern of sub-threshold priming — both excitatory and inhibitory — which allows context and expectation to modulate the ease with which different connections will 'fire'. A likely or plausible concept will be pre-primed with some excitation, so the amount of incoming evidence it requires before it fires, and the length of time this evidence will take to accumulate, is reduced. Conversely, something unexpected or suppressed will be primed with a quantity of inhibitory activation, which means it will need more information, and take a longer time, before it will respond to the sensory evidence.

Thus, despite the blindfold, Pete's neural net, just before he opens his eyes, will be far from equipotential. Though he does not know exactly what he is going to see, his network

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[1] Perception is, of course, designed to register changes over time, but evolution has tuned it to pick up rates and kinds of change that are of significance to the survival of the organism as a whole: a falling rock, a running figure, a sudden smell of smoke, a modulation in the cry of a child. Changes that lie outside a certain temporal range are too fast or too slow to be spotted. The growth of a tree, the ageing of a friend, even the rising of a tide, may be too gradual to register as they occur, and are only detectable by comparing memories or records over longer spans of time, while the flicker of a fluorescent light or the rotation of a propeller are faster than the eye can see. Perception itself normally proceeds, like the propeller, at too great a speed to be detected. There is, after all, no evolutionary advantage to be gained by designing perception to report its own time-course, for exactly the same reason that a clock which was designed to tell you only how fast its own cogs were revolving would be a useless curiosity. So it is natural that we do not think of perception in terms of the time it takes; and that to do so requires an intellectual effort, encouraged by experimental evidence.

will still be predisposing him to detect people rather than elephants, and to be pleasantly (it is his birthday, and these are his friends) rather than unpleasantly surprised. Now, as his eyes open, neural activity in the retina is relayed along the ascending visual pathways, through the lateral geniculate nucleus (the LGN), to the primary visual cortex, and on to the visual association areas, being transformed by the network at each stage. Recognizable features are extracted, and combined into what Marr (1982) famously called the 'two-and-a-half D sketch'. Almost from the word go, this process is not neutral: the descending pathways in the visual system allow Pete's accumulated conceptualisations and expectations to reach down to quite peripheral areas of the visual network and influence the directions which the inflowing activation will take (Singer, 1980). (According to Llinás (1987) the downward inputs to the LGN — those arriving *from* the cortex — outnumber those arriving from the retina by four to one.)

In addition, as more features of the input are isolated, and the sketch becomes more elaborate, even though the scene as a whole has not yet been definitively parsed, nor any element of it labelled, whole areas of *a priori* possibilities are being excluded — 'They might have carried me into the garden, but it's too dark for that . . . ' — and, by quickly raising inhibitory 'road-blocks' around those areas, the network can use its vast store of knowledge progressively to narrow the range of options that is being actively entertained.[2] The involvement of this 'top-down' tipping of the scales towards what is increasingly plausible reduces the amount of 'bottom-up' processing that has to be done, and cuts the time before an acceptable, meaningful but preliminary '4D' sketch of 'What's out there' and 'What's going on' is extracted. By the same token, this 'jumping to conclusions' makes the system vulnerable to occurrences that are implausible or bizarre: it will be slower to detect them, or will mis-recognize them, or may not even register them at all.

Once a tentative 4D sketch has been identified — that is, the activation pattern in the neural network has temporarily centred on a compatible set of concepts and relationships — a whole variety of further developments can then take place.

- Bottom-up processing of the sensory input may continue in order to test and check the preliminary diagnosis and, if it is confirmed, to allow the sketch to be elaborated. Instead of seeing the actors and objects in the scenario simply in terms of their class-membership, their individuality and idiosyncrasies can be filled in.
- Conceptual connotations and contextual associations can be activated, and used to 'fill in' the emerging picture with plausible information which is not actually perceptually present.
- Linguistic labels can be retrieved, and propositions constructed, which, in their turn, give access to the verbal lexicon-cum-encyclopedia, from which more ancillary information can be added to the developing mental model of the situation.
- Either the experiential or the linguistic ramifications, or both, may give rise to an evaluation of the situation, either in whole or part, in terms of its resonance with the systems of threat and desire which are currently primed within the total network. This in turn will generate a preliminary feeling of positive or negative valence towards the situation: a disposition either to approach/maintain it or to avoid/defuse it.
- Where the preliminary analysis indicates that some aspect(s) of the situation are more significant than others, either in terms of their threat/desire value, or because

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[2] In the following paragraphs I am going somewhat — but by no means implausibly — beyond what the 'standard' psychological story currently allows.

they emerge as unknown, unpredictable or problematic, then attention will tend to zoom in on those areas for further perceptual analysis and/or mental archive research. These areas will become more highly 'charged', or activated, within the network, relative to those that have been checked and found safe, predictable or unproblematic. They emerge as functional foreground; the rest recedes into functional background.

- As diagnosis proceeds, so some cluster or family of response dispositions may emerge, and the viscera, musculature and sensory systems will be primed accordingly. If apprehension and confusion begin to give way, on closer analysis, to clarity and relief, the body prepares itself to laugh (as in Pete's case). If the blindfold had been removed to reveal, on inspection, armed stern-faced strangers, Pete's system would have prepared itself to freeze, fight or flee instead.[3]

Following the extraction of the initial multisensory sketch, then, further processing may involve any or all of these elaborations: perceptual, conceptual, linguistic, affective, motivational and behavioural. The balance between these will depend on a whole set of factors varying from the specific nature of the 4D sketch, through the perceived exigencies of the situation, to the long-term priorities, dispositions and personality of the individual. A person less trusting, less light-hearted or more attached to his dignity than Pete might have reacted quite differently.

We might note two options in particular. First, if further processing of the sensory information occurs, it might be *open*, in the sense of remaining receptive to aspects of the situation that do not (immediately) jibe with the preliminary picture, in which case the overall interpretation may be altered or even overturned; or it might be (relatively) *closed*, in which case only those observations or interpretations which conform to and confirm the 4D sketch are noted and incorporated. Secondly, the additional assumptions, beliefs, values, etc. which are being 'stirred in' to the increasingly complex perceptual brew may themselves set up secondary reverberations which can reinforce, or conflict with, the feelings and dispositions for action which have already been activated. If Pete's initial reaction had been fearful or angry, but his elaboration had included the threat of being seen as 'humourless', he might have been torn between getting cross and 'seeing the funny side', and compromised with a laugh that was somewhat hollow.

Consciousness and the Self

With this outline model of perception in hand, let me turn to the two main concerns of this paper: the fabrication of *conscious* experience; and the role in that process of the 'self system'. Nothing in the account I have given so far determines the role of consciousness. It is quite possible for the whole process of perception and reaction to be run off without conscious awareness appearing at any point. Everyday experience attests to this — it is not uncommon for a driving manoeuvre, or a sharp retort, to be produced without any conscious recognition of the processing, either sensory or interpretive, on which that response depends. Indeed, when people are asked to account for their actions, Nisbett and Wilson (1977), Gilovich (1991) and others have shown that what is often produced is a plausible post-hoc confabulation, rather than an accurate read-out of antecedents. At what point, then, does consciousness appear, and what is its status?[4]

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[3] In introducing the emotional into the perceptual in this way, I am drawing on the elegant approach to the psychology of emotion of Keith Oatley (1992).

[4] I am going to *assume* a broadly materialist position in what follows, and see where it can get us, rather than adopting the currently fashionable (in some quarters) approach of trying to sort out the philosophical 'isms' from first principles before getting started. I would argue that this pragmatic

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Recent discussions of the neural conditions under which consciousness appears, the issue of 'neuronal adequacy' (Crick, 1994; Libet, 1993), seem to suggest that it is not just a matter of the strength or concentration of neural activation — which many authors, from Freud (1895) onwards, had proposed — but also of the persistence or reverberation of activity within some circuitry of the neural net for a certain minimum duration. Libet's findings are not uncontroversial, and space does not permit me to do justice to the technical issues. (For one side of the story see Dennett,1991.) But I am, for the sake of argument, going to assume his general principle here: that it is a necessary condition for conscious awareness that a certain level of neural activation cycles through a part of the network for a minimum period of the order of half a second. In connectionist language this may be referred to as a quasi-stable relaxation state of the network.

What is important is the fact, not the location, of this reverberation. I agree with Dennett (1991), Kinsbourne (1993) and others that there is, in all probability, no single area of the brain that is associated with consciousness. As Dennett puts it:

> An element of content becomes conscious . . . not by entering some functionally defined and anatomically located system, but by changing state right where it is: by acquiring some property or by having the intensity of one of its properties boosted above some threshold. [In other words] consciousness is a *mode of action* of the brain, rather than a *subsystem* of the brain. (p. 166.)

And Kinsbourne goes further in associating consciousness not with a kind of activity in any single area, but with a more widely distributed pattern of activation.

> Consciousness is . . . a property of particular patterns of neuronal firing . . . Being conscious is what it is like to have neuronal circuitry in particular interactive functional states. (p. 44.)

Many authors have suggested, consistent with this line of thought, that there is a general condition under which the requisite combination of intensity and persistence (whatever it may be) is produced: when the preliminary (as yet unconscious) analysis of a situation reveals the suspicion, but not the clear certainty, of a threat of some kind; or when a clear threat is present but the execution of an appropriate response is blocked by other considerations. At its most basic, consciousness appears when an aspect of the 4D sketch is *problematic*. Under such conditions, the forward flow of perception into action is temporarily arrested while further data is gathered either from the outside world, or from the internal archives, or both. It is as if an inhibitory ring is thrown up around the current centre of excitatory activity (Kinsbourne, 1993), preventing spontaneous on-flow and encouraging the reverberation and intensification of activation within that area. Mandler (1975), for example, notes that 'The first and most widely addressed function of consciousness considers its role in choice and the selection of action systems' (p. 56). While Pepper (1966) likewise argues that:

> The conditions for consciousness have important biological functions. They are apparently, for man at least, those conditions for intelligent action when a problematic situation has arisen, something that old habits cannot take care of, something

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way of proceeding is at least as defensible as that which demands rational *a priori* justification, and significantly more productive. Chalmers' (1995) contentious distinction between the so-called 'easy' and 'hard' problems of consciousness will, I suspect, set the field of consciousness studies back if it is taken to insist on philosophical clarity as a prerequisite of empirical progress. The history of ideas is replete with examples of such 'hard' problems being revealed as linguistic conundrums by empirical advances. As the Roman orator Quintillian said, 'scientia difficultatem facit' — it's (often) the theory that creates the difficulties.

that demands the marshalling of evidence and organisation of it for the resolution of the problem. They are the conditions, in short, for the construction of a new purposive act. (p. 37.)

What I am suggesting is a variant on this undeniable liaison between consciousness and choice. Conscious awareness is associated not with the construction of the new act, or the reordering of priorities *per se* — that is the business of the neural net which it does perfectly well without consciousness — but with the internal process of disruption, reverberation and redistribution of activation that precedes it (Oatley, 1992).

In animals this state of affairs is triggered by intimations of threat to the physical survival of self or offspring, or by the unexpected availability of resources — a water-hole, a mate — conducive to it. In human beings, however, these conditions are occasioned, much more frequently, by the presence, within the neural net as a whole, of the socially-conditioned ganglion of threat- and desire-systems that we may call, generically, the 'self system' (Whyte, 1979). Csikszentmihalyi (1988), for example, has suggested that:

> The self represents its own interests as *goals*. Each self develops its own hierarchy of goals, which become, in effect, the structure of that self . . . We receive most goals from the genetic instructions of our biological inheritance, or from the cultural instructions embodied in societal values. (p. 22.)

Such a system, installed in the modern mind, represents an extraordinary proliferation of potential needs and vulnerabilities. Loss of possessions, reputation, relative social standing, reliable character, control of thoughts or emotions, predictability itself — each of these may, through *identification* with the self system, count as a significant or even vital threat, and any perceptual moment may, if one scrutinizes it closely enough, contain a worrisome possibility. By 'identification', I mean the state in which the self system as a whole, or an aspect of it, is held to be an accurate and vital description of 'who I really am', and therefore specifies those conditions which the person is committed to seeking, perpetuating, escaping or avoiding if she or he (thus defined) is to survive.

The more complex the self system, and the stronger the identification with it, the more probable it is that every percept will need to be checked by 'Security' for possible desirable or noxious contents; and the delay involved, as the 4D sketch is resonated with the priorities of the self, means that conscious awareness, and especially the intense and emotionally laden variety commonly referred to as *self-consciousness* becomes both more acute and more chronic. Action too has to be held back — 'checked' in both senses of 'arrested' and 'examined' — in case it may give rise to further self-related trouble, sometimes to the point of virtual paralysis. In neural net terms, we might see this checking process as involving the engagement of the self system sub-network with the overall pattern of active circuitry, so that incoming information is able, if it will, to recruit the pre-primed set of hopes and fears which the self represents. The self sub-network may be engaged persistently, across a period of time, for example in an episode of self-consciousness such as an interview; or it may be 'turned on' by the presence, in the pre-conscious 4D sketch, of the provisional identification of something as a threat. Or we might more plausibly suppose that, at any moment, some aspects of the self system are chronically primed; others are being activated in response to the preliminary perceptual diagnosis; and others may be quiescent. (Everyday experience attests to the lability and variability of the sense of self which is operative at any instant.)

Every experience that has been resonated in this way becomes bound to the overall sense of self, and thus, if it finally achieves conscious status, it will come trailing clouds

of self-hood: the nebulous (or acute) sense of unease which Buddhism refers to as *dukkha*, the apparent separation of experiencer from experience, of actor from action, and the obscure sense of the coherent, continuing 'I' that Dennett (1991) nicely characterizes as the (hypothetical) 'narrative centre of gravity'.[5]

. This retardation of consciousness has the potential to create a vicious cycle, for at the same time as it allows for greater checking and editing, it may also create the possibility of stirring in to the developing concoction more and more ingredients that are supplied not by the external world but by a person's own store of hopes, fears and conjectures. Conclusions may be leapt to without ever seeing that that is what has happened. Projections may come to eclipse 'reality'. The left hand, so to speak, may be writing wilder and wilder accusations which the censorious right hand has to work ever harder to temper or expunge.

We are now ready to come to the point. My core contention is that the presence of an active and vulnerable self system within the neural network serves to channel and constrain the options which I adumbrated above for post-preliminary processing. A self system that requires the continual creation of a central, coherent and largely creditable narrative character will constrain pre-conscious processing to deliver such a story. A self system that is invested in correctness — whether perceptual, political or otherwise — is constrained to be disputatious, dogmatic and loath to reconsider any earlier judgments it may have made. And a self system that is assailed by the acknowledged experience of sadness or fear or anger or wildness requires any such emotion or cognition to be deleted pre-consciously. (We have returned here to the search for a cognitive account of repression and denial, initiated by Freud (1895) in his bold 'Project for a Scientific Psychology', and continued by Pribram and Gill (1976), Erdelyi (1985) and Hamilton (1983).) As Csikszentmihalyi (1988) notes,

> Once the self becomes established . . . its main goal is to ensure its own survival.
> To this effect attention, awareness, and memory are directed to replicate those states
> of consciousness that are congenial to the self, and eliminate those that threaten its
> existence.[6]

As all these self-protective operations take additional time, I propose that the seemingly structural conditions for neuronal adequacy for consciousness — reverberation for 400–500ms — may actually arise because of the need for this self-referenced checking; and that, under certain conditions, this delay can be strategically lengthened. Thus I argue that what appear to be *structural* facets of cognition, in particular those to do with its time course, are, at least in part, *strategic*, superimposed by the need to protect a culturally-transmitted sense of self as bounded, persistent, autonomous: a 'thing' which has possessions, powers and personality.

Evidence for the Relationship between Consciousness and Self

I have suggested that it is the neural act of cycling incoming information through the self system, in order to check for self-related significance, that frequently creates the requisite

[5] This is a necessarily compact summary of a complex story which is elaborated in chapters 8–11 of my *Noises from the Darkroom* (Claxton, 1994).

[6] There is more complexity than I can do justice to here. Some uncongenial experiences *do* achieve conscious recognition: those to which we respond with feelings of guilt or shame. Explaining how and why the censoring process contains lapses and leaks would demand another paper. We must also note the fact that threats to physical survival tend to become conscious to a greater extent than those which (merely) threaten the survival of the self system; though this too is not black and white. Direct threats to life *are* deleted from or attenuated in consciousness in the state we refer to as 'shock'.

prolongation and reverberation of the stimulus for conscious awareness to emerge. Specifically, we might make, on the present model, a number of different predictions:

1) When the self system is involved *but unthreatened* by what it finds, there will be a positive association between self-involvement and conscious perception, recollection, etc.

2) When information is threatening to the self system, there will be a tendency to deny this information to conscious awareness; and a dislocation may appear between behavioural indicators of unconscious processing and what is consciously reported.

3) When the self system is inoperative at the time of perception, conscious awareness will be reduced (while unconscious processing continues); and *memory* for those experiences will be poor under recall conditions when the self system is subsequently engaged. The same loss of memory will apply if the self system active during perception is of a very different constitution or configuration from the one operative during recall.

Let me note briefly some experimental and neurological evidence that bear on these predictions. Kihlstrom (1993), having reviewed much of this evidence, concludes:

> When a link is made between the mental representation of self and the mental representation of some object or event, then the percept, memory or thought enters into consciousness; when this link fails to be made, it does not. Nevertheless, unconscious percepts and memories, images, feelings and the like can still influence ongoing experience, thought and action — perhaps by serving as sources of activation which spread to other knowledge structures and activates them. (p. 152.)

Conway and Dewhurst (1995) have produced evidence in support of prediction (1). Subjects were shown a list of personality trait adjectives and asked to respond to each in terms of (a) how well they applied to themselves; or (b) how well they applied to a well-known public figure; or (c) whether they were, in a general sense, positive or negative. Later they were asked to select the adjectives they had seen from a longer list, and were asked also to indicate *how* they did so — whether by (i) having a direct conscious 'recollective experience' of the time at which they were studying the word; or (ii) by having a 'feeling of familiarity'; or (iii) by 'just knowing' that the word was one of the ones previously studied. The results showed that there was a much greater chance of having a full-blown conscious recollective experience if the words had originally been studied in relation to a person's own self-image.

Evidence for prediction (2) is abundant. Clinicians such as Weinberger *et al.* (1979) and Mathews (1993) are familiar with patients who score very low on self-report measures of anxiety, for example, yet respond behaviourally and physiologically to events in a manner characteristic of highly anxious individuals. Similar self-related dissociations are reported in the neurological literature. Marcel (1993) reports a patient suffering from hemiplegia with anosognosia who consistently denied her left-sided paralysis. When asked to rate out of ten her ability to catch a large beach-ball, for instance, she would award herself a quite unrealistic eight or nine. However, when the question was put in a different way, and she was asked by the neuropsychologist: 'If I were like you, how good would I be at catching a beach-ball', she replied confidently and accurately: 'Not very good at all, maybe one or two out of ten'. We might suppose that, in her case, the acknowledgement of the deficit would have been so painful, so discordant with the sense of self to which she clings, that when the question is asked directly about

her present condition, it is blocked from consciousness; while when the question seems to be asking not about herself, but about another person, the threat is less, and so the information can be accessed and reported consciously.

Interestingly Humphrey (1993) has implicated threats to self-construct in the well-known 'blindsight' cases. He comments:

> I worked many years ago with monkeys who had had the striate cortex removed: they retained extraordinarily sophisticated visual capacity, much better than anything which has yet been discovered in human beings with lesions of the striate cortex [blindsight patients]. One way of thinking about this is that the monkey has an advantage in that it doesn't have a particularly highly developed concept of self. Hence the monkey's non-sensory [i.e. non-conscious] visual percepts are nothing like so surprising to the monkey as to the human. For a human to have a percept which isn't *his own* percept (related to himself) is very odd indeed. So human patients retreat into saying: 'I don't know what's going on' and denying their ability to see at all. For the monkey, I suspect, [unconscious] perceptual information doesn't create the same sort of existential paradox, therefore the monkey is much more ready to use it . . . Interestingly, for one monkey I worked with for a long time, there *were* conditions under which she became unable to see again — if she were frightened or she was in pain. It was as though anything which drew her attention to her self undermined her ability to use unconscious percepts. (p. 161.)

The idea that disconnection of self from records of events leads to loss of access to those records — prediction (3) — has recently been proposed by Lancaster (1994) as an explanation for implicit memory effects, especially those in some forms of amnesia, where patients completely lack conscious recall, yet show, on indirect measures, clear evidence of retention. He suggests, in line with Kihlstrom, that the amnesic's memory records are not bound in with the self system, and thus lack the requisite retrieval 'tag'.

Other evidence suggests that when perceptual processing occurs at a speed too fast for the self connection to be made, and/or when the stimulus is too faint or fleeting to gain access to consciousness at input, the same loss of memory occurs in normal subjects. Cumming (1971) used a technique called 'lateral masking', in which a brief, weak stimulus is accompanied by other, stronger stimuli which effectively prevent the central stimulus from becoming conscious. It gets 'shouted down', so to speak, by the simultaneous chorus of louder voices. He found that, when people are given plenty of time to respond under these marginal conditions, they fail to detect the target stimulus. But if you urge them to respond quicker and quicker, a strange thing happens. Now they *do* respond correctly to the presence of a target — showing that though it had failed to make it into consciousness, it has been registered unconsciously — but they then, a moment later, verbally apologise for having made a 'mistake'. The 'fast track', unconsciously mediated, response is correct; but when the 'slow track' process checks for the stimulus consciously, it cannot find it, and so assumes that there was nothing there, and that the fast response must therefore have been an error.

The Russian psychologist Chistovich (1966) studied people repeating aloud text played to them over headphones. She found two different patterns of response. Some people 'shadowed' the text with a delay of a second or so, and they showed quite good memory for what they had been repeating. Others, however, shadowed with a much smaller delay, of the order of 150–250ms, and these subjects had little or no memory for the content of the text. Again, if the perception–response cycle is happening too fast for the consciousness-creating self system to get involved, deliberate conscious recall is impossible.

Though the experiment has not been performed, we might conjecture that such subjects would show *implicit* retention of the material.

The ability to respond to a stimulus in this pre-conscious 'fast track' mode is of real-life significance, and its availability through training reveals the strategic, as opposed to structural, nature of the normal delay. If an Olympic 100 metre sprinter, for example, waits for conscious recognition of the starting pistol, he or she will start half a second or so behind a competitor who is able, as Linford Christie has put it, to 'go on the "B" of Bang'. It has been argued at length by Suzuki (1959) that the training of a Zen swordsman involves the cultivation of the same ability: to respond 'selflessly' to the movement of an opponent with the same immediacy with which, as that tradition puts it, a spark appears as the steel strikes the flint.

The *Abhidhamma* Psychology of Perception

If the delay before an image of 'the sensory world' is delivered into conscious awareness is partly strategic, designed both to embroil the self system and its multiple assumptions and beliefs, and to 'massage' the presented image so as to remove elements which, if presented in consciousness would cause additional threat to the self system, then it might be possible, through some kind of retraining of attention, to reduce this delay, and to apprehend the world in consciousness in a way that is less adulterated by one's own values and projections. This, I shall argue, is precisely the effect of certain forms of Buddhist meditation, especially those concerned with the cultivation of 'mindfulness' or non-intellectual 'insight' (*vipassana*).[7]

It is no coincidence that the Buddhist tradition has also paid explicit and detailed attention to the microstructure, and the temporal unfolding, of perception, and offers, in the core teachings of the *Abhidhamma*, a psychological analysis similar in many ways (though not all) to the one presented above (see Aung, 1910; Cousins, 1982; Lancaster, 1994).[8] The *Abhidhamma*, or 'higher teaching', is a section of the Buddhist Pali canon deriving, it is claimed, from the earliest attempts to systematise the Buddha's teachings, some two to three hundred years after his death, though it, in its turn, has been the subject of countless commentaries, expositions and rewritings down the centuries.

In one of these versions (Aung, 1910), perception is analysed into seventeen successive stages or infinitesimal 'moments'. The initial impinging of an (inner or outer) stimulus causes the 'unconscious mind' (*bhavanga*) to turn towards the sensory 'door' which has been 'knocked upon'. The mind orients itself towards the appropriate channel and prepares to receive its message. In the next phase[9] the message, as yet unanalysed in any detail, is 'tasted' for its overall 'affective tone' to see whether it is broadly agreeable, disagreeable or neutral. Then the message is examined, analysed in more detail, so that it may be recognized and labelled. Following this the mind begins, in the stage called 'establishing', to begin to prepare itself for a general kind of response; to adopt a motivational orientation or attitude towards the message or event. What is especially noteworthy in the *Abhidhamma* formulation is that all the stages up to and including

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[7] The resonances between neuroscience, cognitive science and Buddhism have been explored at length in *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991). Their ideas of 'enactive cognition', 'structural coupling' and cognition as 'bringing forth a world' provide an epistemological context within which the present, more specific, conjectures may be situated.

[8] In this brief exposition of the *Abhidhamma* I shall draw on the useful psychological formulation offered by Lancaster (1994).

[9] For simplicity's sake I am collapsing some of the original seventeen 'moments' in this presentation

'establishing' are seen as proceeding passively or automatically, and *without conscious awareness*. The Buddhist understanding of mind rests on a fundamental recognition of the existence and the power of unconscious cognition.

After 'establishing', however, comes a series of stages referred to collectively as *javana*, or 'running'. It is here that the mind begins to elaborate the interpretation and significance of the event, and to develop more fully a response to it, and it does so, inevitably, by 'stirring in' to the developing impression its own assumptions and preoccupations. This is a crucially important series of stages because it is here, as Lancaster writes, 'that an individual's habitual ways of seeing things will become incorporated . . . Moreover, in mundane circumstances, *the sense of self as subject of the perception is generated*' (p. 6: emphasis added). And it is during the stages of *javana* that consciousness arises. Finally there are two moments of 'registering', which, according to Cousins (1982), 'may perhaps be seen as "fixing" the conscious experience of the *javana* stage in the unconscious mind' (p. 28) — in other words, committing the fruits of the self-conscious processing stages to memory.

Though the similarities between this and the present model are undeniable, there are a number of places, which we should quickly note, where modern cognitive psychology might wish to diverge from the *Abhidhamma* formulation. First, traditional Buddhism has no brain-based model of the mind, so it cannot unpack its analysis any further, and therefore has no way, for example, of describing the evanescent pattern of bias and expectation on which any new impression must be overlaid. (This is not, of course, a problem for Buddhism *qua* soteriology, where the over-riding concern is not with complete explanation, but with formulations that have practical value for the saving of souls.) Secondly, the *Abhidhamma* idea that one can 'taste' the positive or negative valency of an impression *before* one has even a preliminary or provisional identification of it smacks of a realism that modern psychology would in general question. There are obviously some raw sensations that are genetically recognised as congenial or un-congenial to survival — blasts of heat or cold, very loud or very bright stimuli, for instance — but beyond these, the relevance of events to one's own survival depends on the attributions and identifications one makes, and these require the bringing to bear of conceptual knowledge, albeit at a pre-conscious level. And thirdly, students of cognition would be unlikely to see conscious perception and memorisation as such functionally distinct operations, in the way that the *Abhidhamma* separates *javana* from 'registering'. Connectionist or neural net theory would more naturally see the modification of the weights and pathways of the network as automatically part-and-parcel of perceptual processing.

Perceptual Retraining through Mindfulness Meditation

Despite these differences, the parallels are striking, and nowhere more so than if we turn from the canonical formulations of the *Abhidhamma* to the writings of one of the foremost contemporary meditation teachers from the Sri Lankan tradition of Theravadan Buddhism, Nyanaponika Thera (1983, 1986). Nyanaponika draws on the *Abhidhamma* analysis, but shows how the involvement of the self system causes a drift in perceptual habits away from the accurate sensing of things towards a leaping to self-interested conclusions. And he also argues for the value of mindfulness meditation practice (*satipatthana-bhavana*, or the cultivation of 'bare attention') as a way of retraining these perceptual habits, and thus releasing mental functioning, somewhat, from the controlling and egocentric influence of the self system.

Right Mindfulness starts at the beginning. In employing the method of Bare Attention, it goes back to the seed state of things. Applied to the activity of mind this means: observation reverts to the very first phase of the process of perception when mind is in a purely receptive state, and when attention is restricted to the bare noticing of the object. That phase is of a very short and hardly perceptible duration, and ... it furnishes a superficial, incomplete and often faulty picture of the object [the '4D sketch']. It is the task of the next perceptual phase to correct and supplement that first impression, *but this is not always done*. Often the first impression is taken for granted, and even new distortions, characteristic of the more complex mental functions of the second stage, are added.

Normally man is not concerned with a disinterested knowledge of 'things as they truly are', but with 'handling' and judging them from the view point of his self-interest ... He tacks labels to things, and these labels mostly show clearly the impress of his self-interest and his limited vision. It is such an assemblage of labels in which he generally lives and which determines his actions and reactions.

The attitude of Bare Attention — bare of labels — will open to man a new world ... He will notice ... how rarely he is aware of a bare or pure object without any ... added subjective judgements, such as: beautiful or ugly, pleasant or unpleasant, useful, useless or harmful ... It is the task of Bare Attention to eliminate all those alien additions from the object proper that is then in the field of perception ... This will demand persistent practice during which the attention, gradually growing in its keenness, will, as it were, use sieves of increasingly finer meshes by which first the grosser and then ever subtler admixtures will be separated until the *bare object* remains. (1983, pp. 31–3.)

Let me put this back into psychological language. Both content-specific psychological defence mechanisms, and a spurious sense of self, rely for their existence on the lazy, coarse, unvigilant and slapdash quality of normal perception. Because these effects occur 'upstream' of consciousness, and because we take conscious experience at face value — i.e. we do not usually admit the existence of these 'upstream' influences into our view of our own psychology — they are 'invisible'. They function as perceptual presuppositions, the 'context' that determines not only what but how we see. False or dysfunctional presuppositions of this kind are therefore very hard to root out, because they are not open to the checking process that consciousness itself betokens.

What is required is a way of making them *questionable*; of giving them the status of hypotheses which are then subject to the processes of inhibition (of automatic responses) and scrutiny (to see if the evidence justifies them) with which consciousness itself is associated. Instead of viewing the central content of conscious awareness as 'reliable' or 'true', we have to restore it to its original status which is exactly the reverse: what we are most consciously aware of is that which the mind is currently treating as the most problematic. And when a 'presupposition' is turned into an object of 'inquiry', it becomes possible to observe what is going on *before* that assumption has been stirred into perception — that is before the evidence has been rigged, by the assumption, in its own favour — and thus it can be 'seen through', modified or even abandoned.

Mindfulness meditation involves coming alive to the fact that perception *is* a process that occurs (albeit at lightning speed) in time; and that there are many phases to this process, some of which reveal, but others of which can conceal under a rococo facade of projections, what is 'there'. And it does this by the gentle, sustained effort to reduce the habitual delay which allows consciousness to be adulterated. The discipline which is

practised requires a retraining of attention, so that instead of one only 'noticing' what is occurring in the limelight of consciousness, after all the unconscious adulteration has been performed, one attempts to focus one's attention on the *arrival* of thoughts, sensations, etc. in conscious awareness. One learns gradually to attend to the leading edge of consciousness. By attempting to see things as they arise, rather than waiting to pay attention to them until they are fully-formed, one's vantage point is gradually shifted back 'upstream'. One reduces the delay, the time available for the unconscious doctoring, and therefore stands an increasing chance of being able to catch experience at a point before some assumption or other has been introduced. This is the sense in which 'insight' is used in the *vipassana* tradition. It refers not to some sudden moment of intellectual under- standing, but to a direct experience of un- or less adulterated life.

The core contention of Buddhism is that this leaping to perceptual conclusions is the major source of suffering and confusion in human life. We are constantly, unwittingly, being hoist with the petard of our perceptual sloppiness, which allows a highly question- able nexus of threat-, belief- and desire-systems to bounce us around without much understanding or control.

> But if we muster the restraining forces of mindfulness and pause for bare attention, the material and mental processes that form the objects of mind at the given moment will reveal themselves to us more fully and more truly. No longer dragged at once into the whirlpool of self-reference, allowed to unfold themselves before the watchful eye of mindfulness, they will disclose the diversity of their aspects, and ... the connection with self-interest, so narrow and often falsifying, will recede into the background, dwarfed by the wider view now gained ... (Nyanaponika, 1986, p. 73.)

Conclusion

This is not the place to explore in any detail the claims that Buddhism makes for its practices, still less to extol the virtues of any one school or teacher. All I have sought to do here is to show how the cognitive psychological view of perception, and a range of empirical studies to which that generic view has given rise, resonate with, and at some points amplify or correct, the traditional Buddhist understanding. While at the same time the psychological view as presented offers fruitful speculations about the momentary processes whereby conscious experience is fabricated, and the way in which strategic, as opposed to structural, aspects of those processes can be changed through meditation-like practices.

By allowing oneself to follow a basically materialist and constructionist line of thought, current research in cognitive science not only illuminates the relationship between conscious experiences and unconscious mental processes, and clarifies the epistemological status of conscious states of awareness; it leads, via an analysis of the micro-structure of perception to a fruitful rapprochement with some of the teachings of the spiritual traditions, and to a psychological explication of the effects of attentional retraining through meditation.

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The Use of Meditation In Psychotherapy: A Review of the Literature

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Are meditation and psychotherapy compatible? While meditation leads to physiological, behavioral, and cognitive changes that may have potential therapeutic benefits, psychoanalytic and Jungian critics claim that meditation is regressive, fosters dissociation, and neglects the unconscious. In contrast, transpersonal theorists contend that, when used with attention to assessing the individual's developmental stage and choice of an appropriate method, meditation may promote inner calm, loving kindness toward oneself and others, access to previously unconscious material, transformative insight into emotional conflicts, and changes in the experience of personal identity.

INTRODUCTION

Jacob Needleman[1] has written that increasing numbers of contemporary Westerners "no longer know whether they need spiritual or psychological help" (p.110). While therapy is often sought for removing the obstacles that stand in the way of personal happiness, spiritual disciplines like meditation are frequently pursued by those "yearning for something inexplicably beyond the duties and satisfactions of religious, moral, and social life" (p.113). But might there be some point of meeting between therapy and meditation? Could these two approaches to human growth complement and benefit each other in some way? Could they be integrated and utilized in tandem?

Over the past two decades there has been a growing interest in the potential use of meditative practices in psychotherapy.[2,3] This has given rise to a fertile dialogue regarding the confluences and divergences of the traditions of contemplative practice and Western psychotherapy.[4-6] Questions have been raised about whether these two methods of human growth are compatible. Might meditation offer access to dimensions of human experience that are largely untouched by Western therapy, and possibly augment or improve the effectiveness of therapy? Does meditation lead to improvements or difficulties in psychological adjustment? How significant are meditation's physiological and cognitive effects? Is meditation fundamentally out of place in the clinical setting, intended to precipitate entirely different kinds of changes in human behavior, personality, and

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consciousness? Are there dangers in introducing meditation into the therapeutic context? How might these dangers be avoided?

This brief review of some of the research that has been done to date will focus upon the therapeutic integration of meditative techniques. I will consider theories suggesting that meditation leads to physiological, behavioral, and cognitive changes that have potential therapeutic benefits, as well as suggesting ways in which meditation is more than just a relaxation, behavioral, or cognitive technique. I will then examine some of the problems raised by psychoanalytic and Jungian critiques of meditation. Finally, I will explore the views of several authors associated with the field of transpersonal psychology, Jack Engler, Ken Wilber, Mark Epstein, and Elbert Russell, who have done important work comparing Eastern psychologies (especially Buddhist) and Western views of the self—the individual's conception of being a separate and distinct person with a unique identity—in order to to illuminate how psychotherapy and meditative disciplines might inform and assist one another.

MEDITATION

There are many forms of meditation that have been developed and passed on by humanity's religious and spiritual traditions. Many involve some form of withdrawal of attention from the outer world and from customary patterns of perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and motor activity, performed in a state of inner and outer stillness. There are, however, forms of meditation that utilize music, movement, or visual or auditory contemplation of physical objects or processes (i.e., staring at a candle flame, watching or listening to a stream of water or ocean waves). Goleman[7] divides meditation into two main categories: concentration methods and insight techniques.

Concentrative meditation fixes the mind on a single object such as the breath or a *mantra* and attempts to exclude all other thoughts from awareness. This kind of meditation is prescribed in the Yoga Sutras[8] and Buddhism,[9] and has been popularized in the form of "Transcendental Meditation"(TM). Concentration practices suppress ordinary mental functioning, restrict attention to one point, and induce states of absorption characterized by tranquility and bliss.[10]

Buddhism, however, also introduced the practice of insight meditation (*vipassana*), the goal of which is insight into the nature of psychic functioning, not the achievement of states of absorption. *Vipassana* is a training in mindfulness in which attention is focused upon registering feelings, thoughts, and sensations exactly as they occur, without elaboration, preference, selection, comments, censorship, judgment, or interpretation[10] (p.21). It is a process of expanding attention to as many mental and physical events as possible, the goal of which is understanding of the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-substantial nature of all phenomena. Thus, it is primarily a means of knowing one's mental processes more clearly—for example, by understanding the chain of "mind moments" that lead to suffering—and of learning to shape and control them.

These two kinds of meditation may have very different effects on the practitioner and thus may have very different clinical applications. A comparison of two EEG studies[11,12] showed that yogis in meditation are oblivious to the external world, while Zen meditators become keenly attuned to the environment. Thus, different forms of meditation are associated with different patterns of brain activity and different forms of attention. The distinctions between various forms of meditation such as TM sand *vipassana* are significant because they enable us to recognize that a meditation technique may appropriately be applied in therapy only if it matches the therapeutic goals being sought, for example, stress reduction, working through difficult emotions, or seeking transformative transpersonal experiences.

Finally, in order to speak intelligibly about meditation we must not only make these distinctions between various kinds of meditation, but we must also note that different effects may be associated with different stages of meditative practice; i.e., long-term practitioners may experience different physiological, cognitive, and psychological states and changes than novices.

Why Use Meditation in Psychotherapy?

Deatherage[13] studied the effectiveness of meditation techniques as a primary or secondary technique with a variety of psychiatric patients. He conceptualized meditation as a self-treatment regimen (highly efficient for the use of the therapist's time and therefore quite cost-effective) that helps patients know their own mental processes and preoccupations, develop the "observer self," and gain the ability to shape or control their mental processes.

Carpenter[14] writes that "Meditation and esoteric traditions have much to offer psychotherapy," and suggests that the efficacy of meditation in therapy is due to a combination of relaxation, cognitive and attentional restructuring, self-observation, and insight. Shapiro and Giber[15] discuss two main hypotheses regarding the mechanisms responsible for the therapeutic benefits of meditation: first, the view that meditation brings about a state of relaxation; and secondly, the view that meditation is effective by inducing an altered state of consciousness.

Deikman[16] argues that Western psychology has much to learn from the traditions of mystical sciences, which claim that central sources of human suffering originate in ignorance of our true nature, and that achieving enlightenment, or the experience of the "Real Self" alleviates human suffering by removing its basis. Western therapy, he writes, focuses on emotions, thoughts, memories, impulses, images, self-concepts, all of which are contents of consciousness. But Western psychology fails to concern itself with the fact that our core sense of personal existence—what Deikman calls "the observing self"—is located in awareness itself, not in its contents. Thus awareness remains beyond thought and images, memories, and feelings, and cannot be observed, but must be experienced directly. Meditative techniques heighten awareness of the observing self, change customary patterns of perception and thinking (p.33), and change

motivation, lessening the intensity of motivations connected with the ego (the "object self"), leading to reduction of symptoms (p.11).

In Deikman's view, "Meditation is an adjunct to therapy, not a replacement for it" (p.143). Therapy is most helpful for persons seeking relief from symptoms interfering with work, intimacy, and pleasure (p.174). Therapy ameliorates neurotic self-centeredness, corrects misinterpretations of the world, and teaches new strategies that are more effective in meeting a person's needs. Western therapy focuses on fulfillment of personal desires, the gratification of the object self (p.81). Mysticism questions and uproots craving, and tries to bring about a change in psychological and emotional state or attitude that leads to a diminishment of the problems that are the focus of therapy (p.78). Vassallo[17] concurs, writing that by illuminating two basic human dilemmas—clinging and ignorance—Buddhist psychology and meditative practices help people accept reality as it is and decreases their individualistic preoccupation.

Kutz, Borysenko, and Benson[18] state that meditation may be a primer for therapy, for observing and categorizing mental events provides insight into how mental schemes are created, giving rise to a greater sense of responsibility and allowing one to step out of conceptual limitations and stereotyped reactions and behaviors. Meditation thus spurs the desire for deeper self-understanding through therapy, and actually leads, in their view, to an intensification of the therapeutic process. Meditation is a form of introspection pursued outside of the therapeutic session, for which patients pay with their own time, not the therapist's time. Thus meditation enhances the quality of therapy by involving patients more deeply in the process of self-exploration and providing abundant material for exploration in therapy sessions. Moreover, therapy and meditation both assume that understanding one's pain and defenses against it can alleviate suffering and promote psychological growth. They argue that combining meditation and therapy is "technically compatible and mutually reinforcing."

Bradwejn, Dowdall, and Iny[19] disagreed with these conclusions, writing that the goal of meditation (the realization that the self or ego is illusory) is irreconcilable with the therapeutic goal of facilitating development of a cohesive ego. Corton[20] cautioned that before combining therapy and meditation, the developmental levels of patients must be carefully considered. Wolman[21] argues that the combination of meditation and therapy is redundant. In contrast, however, Dubs's study[22]—which used interviews and questionnaire assessments of 30 long-term meditators and identified unresolved anger as a key element in resistance to progress in meditation—suggests that psychological and spiritual growth are linked, perhaps sequentially and developmentally.

Bacher[23] suggested that a sequential approach in which psychotherapy precedes meditation is more beneficial than a blended approach. It is important, in his view, to respect the developmental tasks of the person emphasized by existential-humanistic therapy: self-identification, emotional contact and expres-

sion, ego development, and increase in self-esteem are all necessary before the individual can undertake in a serious way the tasks of meditation: the disidentification from emotional and egoic concerns. Although meditation and therapy perform corollary functions in the enhancement of individual well-being—the intensification of present awareness and lifting of repression—there are major philosophical differences that make separation advisable. Bacher notes that keeping a clear distinction between them maintains the full integrity and power of each to accomplish its stated aims. Meditation teaches the skills of attention and a still mind, a state of inner harmony and a transformation and transcendence of the personal concerns that are the focus of psychotherapy.

Vaughan[24] lists the following components common to both therapy and meditation: Telling the truth; releasing negative emotions; the need for effort and consistency; authenticity and trust—avoiding self-deception; integrity and wholeness—accepting all one's experiences and allowing things to be as they are, rather than living in a world of illusion and denial; insight and forgiveness directed toward oneself and others; opening the heart and developing the capacity to give and receive love; awareness and nonjudgmental attention; liberation from limiting self-concepts, from fear and delusion, and from the past and early conditioning.

Kornfield,[25] a noted psychologist and Buddhist meditation teacher, contends that Western therapy emphasizes analysis, investigation, and the adjustment of the personality. Yet it neglects the development of concentration, tranquility, and equanimity, "the cutting power of *samadhi*, the stillness of the mind in meditation" that can "penetrate the surface of the mind" and "empower the awareness to cut neurotic speed" (p.37). Meditation, in his view, is a means not merely of seeking comfort and stability, but of working with inner turmoil and undergoing a profound transformation that represents the death of the self that is the main focus of attention in psychotherapy. However Kornfield[26] also emphasizes that "meditation doesn't do it all." In many areas, he writes, such as grief, communication skills, maturation of relationships, sexuality and intimacy, career and work issues, fears and phobias, and early wounds, Western therapy is quicker and more succesful than meditation.

Odanjnyk[27] writes that meditation teaches a focused attention that eads to increased self-awareness of mental and emotional states, mastery over instinctive, compulsive reactions, insight into one's true nature and into reality, exploration of religious themes, images, and feelings, and expansion of ego consciousness into a more universal consciousness.

Brooks and Scarano[28] studied the effectiveness of TM in the treatment of post-Vietnam adjustment, concluding that it is a useful treatment modality. After three months of meditation, treatment subjects showed significant reductions in depression, anxiety, emotional numbness, alcohol consumption, family problems, difficulty in finding a job, insomnia, and other symptoms of posttraumatic

stress disorder. Therapy subjects in the same study showed no significant improvement on any measure.

Much of the physiological data on meditation suggests its effectiveness for treating a variety of stress-related, somatically based problems. Many studies seem to show that meditation could be a promising preventive or rehabilitative strategy in treatment of addictions, hypertension, fears, phobias, asthma, insomnia, and stress. Research has also suggested that subjects using meditation change more than control groups in the direction of positive mental health, positive personality change, self-actualization, increased spontaneity self-regard and inner directedness and self-perceived increase in the capacity for intimate contact.[29-31] Delmonte[32] discussed the relationship between meditation and personality scores, focusing on self-esteem and self-concept, depression, psychosomatic symptomatology, self-actualization, locus of control, and introversion/extroversion. He found no compelling evidence that meditation changes psychometric scores, but found that meditation does seem to be associated with increases in self-actualization and decreases in depression.

Childs[33] found that use of TM with juvenile offenders was associated with self-actualization, decreased anxiety and drug use, and improvements in behavior and interpersonal relationships. Dice[34] noted that TM promoted improvement of self-concept and internal locus of control. Lesh[35] has shown that meditation may increase therapists' accurate empathy and openness to their own inner experience. And Keefe[36] believes that meditation leads to greater awareness of feelings, enhanced interpersonal perception, and increased present-centeredness, thereby strengthening therapists' effectiveness. Goleman[37] contends that meditation is applicable as a means of deconditioning in cases of general or diffuse anxiety but not in treatment of specific fears. In his view, responses of meditators to stressful situations may be more adaptive, due to the increased ability to let go of stress rather than remain chronically stressed or anxious after the stressful situation has passed.[7]

However, the view that meditation leads to anxiety reduction is a point of contention for some. Many of the findings cited above have been contested on methodological grounds by Smith.[2] Boswell and Murray[38] contend that

> self-report and behavioral measures of anxiety are no more reduced after meditation than after appropriate controls. ... The results uniformly fail to support the contention that meditation is an effective method for reducing anxiety.

Delmonte[39]—using measures of blood lactate, blood flow, hormone levels, plasma phenylalanine, and neurotransmitter metabolites—concluded that there is no compelling evidence that meditation is associated with special state or trait effects at a biochemical level.

THE RELAXATION MODEL

Many of the clinical benefits claimed for meditation are attributed to the physiological state of relaxation associated with meditation. Studies have found

that meditation leads to significant decreases in oxygen consumption, carbon dioxide elimination, respiration rate, cardiac output, heart rate, arterial lactate concentration, respiratory quotient, blood pressure, arterial gases, and body temperature.[48-50] Meditation is also associated with increases in skin resistance and in slow alpha brain waves and a decrease of beta waves.[49] All of these physiological correlates of meditation yield a portrait of a condition of relaxed wakefulness. This has given rise to the view that meditation is basically a relaxation technique, one which allows a calm witnessing of thoughts and reduces somatic symptoms, fears, and phobias through desensitization and reduction of anxiety.

The relaxation model of meditation's therapeutic effectiveness is usually associated with the theory of reciprocal inhibition. Wolpe[51] hypothesized that a phobic reaction would extinguish if it could symbolically occur in the presence of an incompatible response, such as relaxation. This is the foundation of modern behavioral self-control strategies, which will be compared with meditation below.

THE RECIPROCAL-INHIBITION MODEL

Goleman's[7] study of Buddhist Abhidharma psychology and meditation identified the principle of reciprocal inhibition as central to the efficacy of meditation. Abhidharma teachings describe the flow of "mind moments," the constant flux of mental states. Mental states are said to be composed of a set of properties of mental factors, which are differentiated into pure, wholesome, healthy factors, and impure, unwholesome, and unhealthy mental properties. Delusion—perceptual cloudiness or misperception of objects—is the primary unhealthy factor, which gives rise to the unhealthy cognitive factors of perplexity, shamelessness, remorselessness, and to the unhealthy affective factors of agitation, worry, contraction, torpor, greed, avarice, envy, and aversion. These are counteracted by the factors present in healthy states, which are seen as antagonistic to unhealthy states. The most important of these are mindfulness and insight (clear perception of the object as it really is), which suppress the fundamental unhealthy factor of delusion. These lead to the development of modesty, discretion, rectitude, confidence, nonattachment, nonaversion, impartiality, composure, buoyancy, pliancy, efficiency, proficiency, compassion, loving-kindness, and altruistic joy. According to Goleman, "The key principle in the Abhidharma program for achieving mental health is the reciprocal inhibition of unhealthy mental factors by healthy ones."

While Goleman's summary of the Abdhidharma perspective is quite illuminating, the theory of reciprocal inhibition upon which it is based is not immune to criticism. Shapiro and Giber[19] raise questions regarding the reciprocal-inhibition explanation of systematic desensitization of anxiety, saying that this effect may also be due to attention shifts and cognitive refocusing.[52,53] Boals[54] writes that the reciprocal-inhibition theory ignores some of the complexities of the relationship between anxiety and performance, for example, the fact that insufficient levels of

arousal may detract from optimal performance as much as excessive anxiety does. Moreover, the hypothesis that meditation leads to global desensitization of anxiety associated with an individual's thoughts[37] may be unfounded; the relaxation provided by meditation may not be sufficient to achieve desensitization to negative or disturbing thoughts and images that may emerge in the course of meditation.

Furthermore, according to Boals, meditation may not reduce the anxiety associated with symptoms like drug use by substituting relaxation for it; instead it may work by substituting an alternative way by which people can reach an altered state of consciousness (ASC). Thus, while meditation may be associated with a decrease in the use of drugs or alcohol, for example, anxiety reduction may not be the best explanation for this reduction. There is some evidence suggesting that people may ingest substances not to reduce anxiety but to produce an ASC that is positively reinforcing.

Klajner, Hartman, and Sobell[55] write that previous research on the use of relaxation methods (such as meditation) for treatment of drug and alcohol abuse have been premised upon the assumption that substance use is causally linked to anxiety and that anxiety can be reduced by relaxation training. However, evidence suggests that such precipitating anxiety is limited to interpersonal stress situations involving diminished perceived personal control over the stressor, and that alcohol and other drugs are often consumed for their euphoric rather than tranquilizing effects. Thus, empirical support for the efficacy of relaxation training or meditation as a treatment for substance abuse is equivocal. Even in cases of demonstrated effectiveness, they write, increased perceived control is a more plausible explanation than decreased anxiety.

Critiques of the Relaxation Model

In addition to these important questions regarding anxiety reduction and reciprocal inhibition, there are a number of other reasons to reconsider the view of meditation as primarily a relaxation, anxiety-reducing strategy. Boals[24] writes that the relaxation model of meditation has allowed meditation to become more familiar, acceptable, and accessible to the scientific community and to the public at large, and has led to fruitful study of the uses of meditation in a variety of settings. Nevertheless, this view of meditation may have outlived its usefulness. The relaxation model does not provide us with an adequate understanding of the negative consequences sometimes associated with meditation, which can only be explained as symptoms of unstressing (the organism's attempt to normalize itself by eliminating old stresses), a resistance to relaxation, or an eruption of depression that is ordinarily masked by activity.

Furthermore, the relaxation model leads some to believe that meditation is no different from other relaxation techniques.[36-39] Benson,[37] for example, has postulated that meditation, Zen, Yoga, and relaxation techniques—such as

autogenic training, hypnosis, progressive relaxation as well as and certain forms of prayer—elicit a uniform "relaxation response," which only requires a quiet environment, a mental device for focusing attention, a passive solitude, and a comfortable position. Delmonte[60] would seem to confirm this finding, showing that both mantra meditation and hypnosis involve focused and selective attention, reduced exteroceptive and proprioceptive sensory input, passive volition, a receptive attitude, a relaxed posture, and monotonous, rhythmic vocal or subvocal repetition. Both states involve increased drowsiness, a shift toward right-brain-hemisphere activity and parasympathetic nervous-system dominance, increased hypnogogic reverie, regressive mentation, and suggestibility. Both are altered states of consciousness that have in common similar induction procedures, and many state effects.

While the view of a unitary relaxation phenomenon demystifies meditation, Boals writes, it is inaccurate for a number of important reasons.

First, although Benson postulates the relaxation response as a unitary phenomenon, it is difficult to define relaxation precisely. Sleep and TM, for example, are both relaxing, yet they are associated with very different states of consciousness.[61,62] Moreover, many activities that are considered relaxing are quite active and involve states of physiological *arousal*.

Second, some meditation techniques produce different effects on different subjects or in the *same* subject on different occasions.[63–66]

Third, the relaxation model tells us nothing about the process of meditation as it is subjectively experienced.

Fourth, there are quantitative and qualitative differences between various relaxation techniques. I will return below to this point, which is important because failure to distinguish between various methods obfuscates the potential uses of different techniques in alleviating particular kinds of human suffering.

Fifth, as noted earlier, meditation is not a unitary phenomenon: different types of meditation produce widely varying outcomes. For example, Zen meditators grappling with a koan or *vipassana* meditators confronting the naked truth of mental processes may become at least temporarily quite anxious or agitated. Similarly, meditation in the tradition of kundalini yoga[67] may bring about spontaneous motor activity, emotional release, or other forms of psychophysiological arousal. Thus, some forms of meditation do not result in states of relaxation.

Sixth, the mechanisms used to explain the relaxation response may not be valid. For example, rhythm is said to be a central factor used to induce states of meditation; yet some rhythms are arousing rather than relaxing, and many meditation methods do not use rhythm at all (e.g., staring at a candle flame). For all of these reasons, we must conclude that although there is some evidence that meditation does lead to a state of relaxation and does seem to be associated with a reduction of anxiety, the relaxation model is not by itself an adequate explanation of the therapeutic efficacy of meditation.

MEDITATION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Boals[54] and Deikman[16] prefer a cognitive explanation of meditation, viewing it as a process of deliberately altering attention, involving a change of focus from the external world to the inner world, from stimulus variety to stimulus uniformity, from the active mode of consciousness—characterized by focal attention, control, task orientation, manipulation of the environment—to the receptive mode—characterized by diffuse attention and letting go. Goleman[7] also characterizes meditation as the "self-regulation and retraining of attentional habits," through deliberate deconditioning of habitual patterns of perception, cognition, and response.

The cognitive changes resulting from meditation can perhaps best be understood using Deikman's[66] concept of the "deautomatization" of consciousness, brought about by "reinvesting actions and percepts with attention." Deautomatization implies a shift toward a form of perceptual and cognitive organization which some people might consider primitive because it is one preceding the analytic, abstract, intellectual mode. However this mode of perceptual organization could also be viewed as more vivid, sensuous, syncretic, animated, and dedifferentiated with respect to distinctions between self and object, between objects, and between sense modalities. Deikman[66] calls deautomatization a process of "cutting away false cognitive certainties," leading to mystical experiences and unusual modes of perception. Many experiences of altered or mystical states, he believes, can be understood in terms of "perceptual expansion," the "awareness of new dimensions of the total stimulus array," through which aspects of reality previously unavailable enter awareness. Such experiences are "transensate phenomena," experiences that go beyond customary pathways, ideas, and memories, and "are the result of the operation of a new perceptual capacity responsive to dimensions of the stimulus array previously ignored or blocked from awareness."

According to Goleman,[7] meditation induces the experience of flow characteristic of all intrinsically rewarding activities.[70,71] The flow experience is characterized by

> (a) the merging of action and awareness in sustained, non-distractible concentration on the task at hand, (b) the focusing of attention on a limited stimulus field, excluding intruding stimuli from awareness in a pure inwardness devoid of concern with outcome, (c) self-forgetfulness with heightened awareness of function and body states, (d) skills adequate to meet the environmental demand, (e) clarity regarding situational cues and appropriate response. Flow arises when there is optimal fit between one's capability and the demands of the moment[7] (p 47).

Meditation produces a change in internal state that maximizes the possibility for flow experiences while lessening the need to control the environment. Meditation thus leads to "perceptual sharpening and increased ability to attend to a target environmental stimulus while ignoring irrelevant stimuli." Flow is

associated with a sense of the intrinsic rewards of activity and an absence of anxiety and boredom. The flow state that may result from meditation is associated with clarity of perception, alertness, equanimity, pliancy, efficiency, skill in action, and pleasure in action for its own sake.

Another useful cognitive model is found in Delmonte's[73] constructivist approach to meditation based on George Kelly's[74] Personal Construct Theory (PCT). According to Kelly, there are two fundamental realities, the reality beyond human perception (similar to Kant's "noumenon"), and our interpretations or constructions of this primary reality (Kant's "phenomenon"), which are constantly updated in the light of new evidence. Both PCT and Eastern psychologies such as Buddhism agree that normal human understanding involves use of dualistic constructions to make sense of a unitary reality. Buddhism emphasizes the need to see through the illusion of duality through meditation, to recognize the transparency of our construct system, and to experience a greater sense of unity; whereas PCT emphasizes the practical value of dualistic construing and the importance of elaborating evermore effective personal construct systems to more accurately predict events.

Meditation involves two main "cognitive sets," Delmonte writes, constriction and dilation. In constriction, attention acts to exclude or curtail construing by reducing the number of elements to be dealt with to a minimum. Dilation uses suspension of habitual construing while broadening the perceptual field to include more elements, using a more comprehensive organization of the construct system. Thus, in mindfulness meditation one observes the contents of consciousness in a neutral fashion while suspending habitual construing. The stimulus repetition of meditation leads to a condition of "no thought" due to stimulus habituation and inhibition of the construct system. As habitual construing is temporarily blocked, spatial and temporal distortions of awareness may result, or a regression to a preverbal form of sense-making (e.g., sexual arousal, hate, fear, love, anger, changed body size). Delmonte notes that meditation often brings about modification of brain hemispheric laterality, such that advanced stages of meditation inhibit or transcend the functions associated with both left and right hemispheres, a finding that is at odds with those who view meditation as primarily a relaxation response associated with increases in right-hemisphere functioning.

According to Delmonte, the suspension of habitual, logical-verbal construing in meditation frees us of our usual defensive constructions, allowing consciousness to move in new directions. Here Delmonte makes a crucial differentiation between "ascendence," a movement up to a higher, more abstract level within one's personal construct system; and "descendence," in which awareness moves down from cognitive to preverbal or somatic construal, an adaptive regression to unconscious levels of awareness in which repressed emotional material can come into consciousness and be cathartically released; and "transcendence," in which one experiences no thought, the feeling of unity or bliss, in which the meditator

transcends the bipolarity of contrual and thereby recovers the preverbal awareness of the essential unity of reality.

Thus, Delmonte's model suggests that the process of attentional retraining involved in meditation can be beneficial in three distinctive ways: In a pragmatic way, to change human behavior by augmenting and improving our personal construct systems (ascendence); to facilitate the accessing of unconscious material, previously inaccessible from within our construct system (descendence); and to bring about altered states of consciousness in which one experiences, at least temporarily, the free space beyond and prior to our construct systems. Let us examine how meditation could be utilized therapeutically in each of these ways.

MEDITATION AND BEHAVIORAL SELF-MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Through attentional training, meditation brings about a shift toward self-observation and thus may be useful for facilitating behavioral changes.[54,74] Herein may lie one of meditation's most important forms of clinical utility. Deikman[16] writes that the increase in scope and clarity of the observing self that meditation encourages leads directly to freedom from habitual patterns of perception and response (p.98). As the motivations of the object self subside and cease to dominate perception and as the observing self is extracted from the contents of consciousness, one begins to disidentify with automatic sequences of thought, emotion, and fantasy (p.107). The observing self redirects the intensity of affect, obsessive thinking, automatic response patterns, and thus provides the opportunity for modification, mastery, and control of behavior.

Goleman[7] has noted that therapy is treatment for specific symptoms, while meditation is not. Biofeedback or behavioral therapy may be more effective for self-control and relearning of adaptive responses to stress or for treatment of specific psychopathology. Conversely, meditation is useful for providing a general pattern of stress response less likely to trigger overlearned, maladaptive responses. Meditation, he writes, may function as a stress therapy, facilitating more rapid recovery from the psychological and physiological coping processes mobilized in stress situations, allowing more alert anticipations to threat cues, and more effective recovery.

Shapiro and Zifferblatt[75] compared Zen meditation with Western behavioral self-control strategies. In addition to relaxation and refocusing of attention, meditation involves self-observation and desensitization to thoughts, fears, and worries. Attending to the breath in a state of relaxed attention becomes a competing response that desensitizes thoughts and images, and permits increased receptivity to other thoughts, affects, or fantasies. (This refers to the emergence into awareness of previously unconscious material, a topic to which I will return below.)

Methods of behavioral self-change are also based on awareness: self-observation, self-monitoring, and analysis of the elements of the environment

that are controlling one's behavior. Self-control techniques also use monitoring of thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions, and somatic complaints; examination of antecedents, initiating stimuli, and consequences of behaviors; and recognition of the frequency, duration, intensity of the behavior itself.

In Zen meditation on the breath, no attempt is made to plot data charts or employ systematic and written evaluation of data. In contrast, behavioral self-observation focuses on the specific problem area observed, the behavior to be changed or altered, and utilizes the labelling, evaluation, recording, and charting of data for the purpose of discrimination, and self-management. Shapiro and Zifferblatt do not seem to be aware that other forms of meditation such as *vipassana* employ discrimination, labell*·.g*, and recording of all contents and movements of consciousness.

Shapiro and Zifferblatt contend that meditation can promote behavioral self-control skills by teaching one to unstress and empty the mind of thoughts and images, and by increasing alertness to stress situations, thus facilitating performance of behavioral self-observation. Moreover, meditation gives practice in noting when attention wanders from a task, therefore placing the person in a better position to interrupt a maladaptive behavioral sequence. Zen meditation also does not involve cultivation of particular positive images or thoughts, as do active behavioral programming methods for stress and tension management, which use fear arousal as a discriminative stimulus for active relaxation, positive imagery, and self-instructions to cope with the stressful situation. Nevertheless, meditation does allow one to step back from fears and worries, and to observe them in a detached, relaxed way. Thus it alters subsequent self-observation by making the problem seem less intense and by giving a feeling of strength and control.

MEDITATION AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

Psychoanalytic and Buddhist Perspecti\·.s

Meditation may indeed have some usefulness in facilitating the self-observation and behavioral changes sought in some forms of psychotherapy. But to view meditation solely in this manner is to limit our understanding of its potential to promote other important therapeutic goals, for example, the recognition of unconscious conflicts that may be at the root of behavioral problems. In this regard, let us recall Delmonte's observation that meditation can also bring about "descendence" of consciousness, thus increasing access to the unconscious. Goleman[7] also noted that meditation allows formerly painful material to surface. Thus there is some reason to think that meditation might be compatible with psychodynamically oriented psychotherapies focusing on uncovering and working through unconscious material.

Kutz et al.[18] write that meditation leads to greater cognitive flexibility, which allows one to perceive connections between sets of psychological contents that

were hitherto separate and unrelated. In this manner, they contend, meditation loosens defenses and allows the emergence of repressed material. Both meditation and free association involve self-observation, although one is usually discouraged from trying to interpret the meaning of free associations during meditation. Meditation-related free associations are usually available to memory and, like dreams, can be brought into therapy and understood by examining their origin and meaning.

The view that meditation may be a useful means of uncovering unconscious material is not shared by some within the psychoanalytic tradition who view meditation as regressive or pathological. Freud[76] considered all forms of religious experiences as attempts to return to the most primitive stages of ego development, a "restoration of limitless narcissism" (p.19), used as a defense against the fears of separateness. Alexander[77] called meditation a "libidinal, narcissistic turning of the urge for knowing inward, a sort of artificial schizophrenia with complete withdrawal of libidinal interest from the outside world" (p.130). Masson and Hanly[78] contend that the urge to get beyond the ego, which is the goal of mysticism, represents a regression to an earlier, undifferentiated state of primary narcissism, often associated with "an influx of megalomania," and characterized by "the withdrawal of interest from the natural world." Lazarus[79] noted psychiatric problems precipitated by TM. He concluded that TM can be effective when it is used properly by informed practioners, but that when used indiscriminately it can lead to depression and depersonalization, heightened anxiety and tension, agitation, restlessness, or feelings of failure or ineptitude if the promised results do not occur. These findings suggest that the very openness to the unconscious that meditation provides may also contribute to the negative experiences sometimes found among meditators.

Several writers sympathetic to both meditation and the psychoanalytic perspective have attempted to clarify the psychoanalytic understanding of meditation. Shafii[80] conceptualizes meditation as a temporary and controlled regression to the preverbal level or "somatosymbiotic phase" of the mother-child relationship, a regression that rekindles unresolved issues from the developmental phase in which the individual develops a sense of basic trust (i.e., experiences and learns to rely on the continuity and sameness of outer providers and of oneself). Frustrations of basic trust due to breaches in the child's protective shielding give rise to "cumulative trauma," and the consequent maladaptive defense mechanisms studied by psychoanalysis. Meditation, Shafii says, returns the individual to the earliest fixation points and permits reexperiencing of traumas of the separation-individuation phase on a non-verbal level. Meditation, in Shafii's[81] view, is a state of "active passivity" and "creative quiescence" that has some similarities with the "psychoanalytic situation": utilization of a special body posture, limited cathexis of visual perception and increased cathexis of internal perception, enhanced free association of thoughts and fantasies. However, while psychoanalysis emphasizes

verbalization of free-associated thoughts, feelings, and fantasies, in meditation one experiences and witnesses these silently.

Epstein and Lieff[45] emphasize that meditation may be used in both adaptive and regressive ways. They stress that some meditators need a therapeutic framework in which to work out the unresolved unconscious issues that may emerge in the form of an upsurge of fantasies, daydreams, precognitive mental processes, or visual, auditory, or somatic aberrations during meditation. They also note that many of the phenomena that often occur during advanced stages of meditation—such as visions of bright lights, feelings of joy and rapture, tranquility, lucid perceptions, feelings of love and devotion, kundalini experiences, etc.—must not be interpreted simply as pathological symptoms. To do so would be an example of what Wilber[83,84] has called the "pre-trans fallacy," that is

> a confusing of pre-rational structures with trans-rational structures simply because they are both non-rational. . . . It is particularly common to reduce samadhi into autistic, symbiotic, or narcissistic ocean states.[84] (p.146)

Wilber[83,84] has delineated the stages of development comprising what he believes is the full spectrum of human development, from pre-personal to personal to transpersonal stages of consciousness. He emphasizes that we must not equate transpersonal experiences with the pre-egoic states with which they have some structal similarities. According to Wilber[81], meditation is not a way of digging into lower and respressed structures of the submerged unconscious, but rather a way of facilitating emergent growth and development of higher structures of consciousness. Thus, meditation is a progression in transcendence of the ego, not a simple regression in the service of the ego. At the same time, derepression of unconscious material ("the shadow") may occur in meditation, as meditation disrupts the exclusive identification with the present level of development.

Engler,[18] who is both a psychiatrist and a teacher of Buddhist meditation, has written perhaps the most lucid assessment of the problems of using meditation in a clinical setting, one which addresses many of the concerns raised by psychoanalytic critics. In his view, both Buddhist psychology and psychoanalytic ego psychology and object relations theory define the ego (what Buddhists call "personality belief") as an internalized image that is constructed out of experience with the object world and which appears to have the qualities of consistency, sameness, and continuity. According to object relations theory, the major cause of psychopathology is the lack of a sense of self, caused by failures in establishing a cohesive, integrated self, resulting in an inability to feel real. In contrast, Buddhist psychology says that the deepest psychopathological problem is the *presence* of a self, the "clinging to personal existence." That is, identity and object constancy are seen by Buddhist psychology as the root of mental suffering. Thus, whereas therapy devotes itself to regrowing a sense of self, Buddhist meditation is focused upon seeing through the illusory construction of the self. Engler ques-

tions whether or not these two goals are mutually exclusive and suggests that one might be a precursor of the other, concluding, "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody" (p.17).

Engler has noted the tendency for Western students of meditation to become fixated on a psychodynamic level of experience—dominated by primary-process thinking and unrealistic fantasies, daydreams, imagery, memories, derepression of conflictual material, incessant thinking and emotional lability; and their tendency to develop strong mirroring and idealizing transferences to meditation teachers, reflecting a need for acceptance by or merger with a source of idealized strength and calmness, or characterized by oscillation between idealization and devaluation. Engler attributes these problems to the inability to develop adequate concentration, the tendency to become absorbed in contents of awareness rather than the process of awareness; and the tendency to confuse meditation with therapy and to analyze mental content instead of observing it.

However, a more fundamental problem is that meditation may be effective only for persons who have achieved an adequate level of personality organization, and may be deleterious for persons with personality disorders. In Engler's view, many Western students of meditation have prior vulnerability and disturbances in the sense of identity and self-esteem, as well as a tendency to try to use Buddhism as a shortcut solution to age-appropriate developmental problems of identity formation. Thus, such persons often misunderstand the Buddhist "anatta" doctrine that there is no enduring self to justify premature abandonment of essential psychosocial tasks. Engler believes that such students have not achieved the level of personality development necessary to practice meditation, and demonstrate structural deficit pathologies. Many, in his view, are near the borderline level of development, characterized by identity diffusion, failure of integration, split object-relations units, fluid boundaries between self and world, feelings of inner emptiness and of not having a self, and an inability to form or sustain stable, satisfying relationships (p.30). Such persons are attracted to the anatta doctrine because it explains, rationalizes, or legitimates a lack of self-integration. Moreover, borderlines are often attracted to the ideal of enlightenment, which is cathected as the acme of personal omnipotence and perfection. This represents for them a purified state of invulnerable self-sufficiency from which all defilements, fetters, and badness have been expelled, leading in many cases to a feeling of being superior to others.

Buddhist psychology has little to say about the level of self-pathology with structural deficits stemming from faulty early object-relations development because Buddhism does not describe in detail the early stages in the development of the self (p.34). Moreover, Engler believes that Buddhist meditation practices will only be effective when the practitioner has a relatively intact, coherent, and integrated sense of self, without which there is danger that feelings of emptiness

or not feeling inwardly cohesive or integrated may be mistaken for sunyatā (voidness) or selflessness.

Like therapy, *vipassana* meditation is an uncovering technique, characterized by neutrality, removal of censorship; observation and abstinence from gratification of wishes, impulses, or desires, and discouragement of abreaction, catharsis, or acting out; and a therapeutic split in the ego, in which one becomes a witness to one's experience. All of these elements presuppose a normal, neurotic level of functioning. In Engler's view, those with poorly defined and weakly integrated representations of self and others cannot tolerate uncovering techniques or the painful effects that emerge (p.36). Thus insight techniques like *vipassana* run the risk of further fragmenting an already vulnerable sense of self.

The *vipassana* guidelines of attention to all thoughts, feelings, and sensations without selection or discrimination create an unstructured situation intrapsychically. However, the goal of treatment of borderline conditions is to build structure (not to uncover repression), and thus to facilitate integration of contradictory self-images, object images, and affects into a stable sense of self able to maintain constant relationships with objects even in the face of disappointment, frustration, and loss. Such treatment addresses the developmental deficits deriving from early relationships—through a dyadic relationship, not through introspective activities like meditation (p.38). Engler emphasizes that mere self-observation of contradictory ego states is not enough to integrate dissociated aspects of the self, objects, and affects. What is required is confrontation and interpersonal exposure of split object-relations units as they occur within the transference. Thus, Engler writes, "Meditation is designed for a different type of problem and a different level of ego structure" (p.39).

Because a cohesive and integrated self is necessary to practice uncovering techniques like *vipassana*, meditation is not a viable or possible remedy for autistic, psychopathic, schizophrenic, borderline or narcissistic conditions. Concentration techniques, however, may be useful in lowering chronic stress and anxiety, and for inducing greater internal locus of control. In Engler's view, meditation and psychotherapy aimed at egoic strengthening are mutually exclusive; for at a given time, one should either strive to attain a coherent self, or to attain liberation from it (p.48). Engler warns that bypassing the developmental tasks of identity formation and object constancy through the misguided attempt to annihilate the ego has pathological consequences.

Nonetheless, despite these potential drawbacks of meditation, Engler contends that Buddhism has much to teach Western psychology, especially in its radical view of the construction of stable and enduring constructs of self and others as the source of suffering. From the Buddhist perspective, in contrast to that of most Western psychologists, identity and object constancy represent a point of fixation or arrest, and coherency of the self is a position achieved in order

to be transcended (p.47). Therefore, what we consider normality is, in the Buddhist view, a state of arrested development.

Epstein[55] disagrees with Engler's contention that meditation is only an appropriate therapeutic intervention for those already possessing a "fully developed personality." Epstein concedes that some people attracted to meditation have pre-oedipal issues and narcissistic pathologies, but argues that Buddhist meditation may play an effective role in the resolution of infantile, narcissistic conflicts. Mahler[56] found that narcissistic residues persist throughout the life-cycle, centering around memories of the blissful symbiotic union of the child and mother—a time in which all needs were immediately satisfied and the self was not yet differentiated. According to psychoanalytic theory, the infant's experience of undifferentiated fusion with the mother gives rise to two psychic structures: the ego ideal and the ideal ego. The ego ideal is that toward which the ego strives, what it yearns to become, and into which it desires to merge, as well as the ego's memory of the perfection in which it was once contained. The ideal ego is an idealized image the ego has of itself, especially centered around the belief in the ego's solidity, permanence, and perfection; thus it is an image of the ego's remembered state of perfection, a self-image distorted by idealization, sustained by the ego's denial of its imperfections.

In borderline, narcissistic, and neurotic disorders, the ideal ego is strong and the ego ideal is weak. Only with maturation does the ego ideal begin to eclipse the ideal ego. Psychoanalytic theorists view meditation as a narcissistic attempt to merge the ego and the ego ideal to reachieve fusion with a primary object. Thus, in this view, meditation is believed to strengthen the ego ideal and neglect the ideal ego.

Epstein contends that Buddhist meditation can bring about restructuring of both the ego ideal and the ideal ego. From a Buddhist perspective, the experiences of terror that sometimes occur during meditation are the result of insight into the impermanent, insubstantial, unsatisfactory nature of the self and ordinary experience, leading to a sense of fragmentation, anxiety, and fear. Western psychologists are concerned that these experiences could unbalance those with inadequate personality structure. Buddhist psychologists, however, emphasize that equilibrium can be maintained through the stabilizing effects of concentration—which promotes unity of ego and ego ideal by encouraging fixity of mind on a single object, allowing the ego to dissolve into the object in bliss and contentment quite evocative of the infantile narcissistic state. The experiences of terror sometimes resulting from insight practices, however, do not satisfy the yearning for perfection and do not evoke grandeur, elation, or omnipotence. Instead they challenge the grasp of the ideal ego, exposing ego as groundless, impermanent, and empty, and overcome the denials that support the wishful image of the self.

Theravadin Buddhism also postulates an ideal personality—the Arhat, who represents the fruition of meditative practice, and the experience of nirvana, in

which reality is perceived without distortion. The promise of nirvana may thus speak to a primitive yearning. In this manner, the ego ideal is strengthened while the ideal ego is diminished, reversing the relative intensities of these two that are thought to characterize immature personality organization. Buddhism emphasizes the precise balance of concentration and insight, a balance between an exalted, equilibrated, boundless state with one that stresses knowledge of the insubstantiality of the self. Concentration practices strengthen the ego ideal, leading to a sense of cohesion, stability, and serenity that can relieve feelings of emptiness or isolation. Yet if the ego ideal is strengthened without insight into the nature of the ideal ego, the experience of concentration may lead to a sense of self importance or specialness that can increase the hold of the ideal ego. Conversely, when the ideal ego is examined without adequate support from the ego ideal one may become anxious and afraid, leading to morbid preoccupation with emptiness, loss of enthusiasm for living, and an overly serious attitude about oneself and one's spiritual calling. Another danger is that of superimposing a new image of the ideal ego onto the preexisting one, "cloaking the ideal ego in vestments of emptiness, egolessness, and non-attachment."

To understand the therapeutic benefits of meditation, it is important to avoid the pre-trans fallacy[63,64] by distinguishing between experiences that may sound similar yet have very different meanings in the therapeutic and meditative contexts, respectively—for example, equating the states of emptiness that sometimes arise in the course of meditation with the pathological forms of emptiness described by psychoanalysis. Epstein[47] writes that while the experience of emptiness is a subject common to both Western and Buddhist psychologies, these two traditions understand emptiness in fundamentally different ways. Western psychologists have described pathological forms of emptiness characterized by numbness, despair and incompleteness, identity diffusion, existential meaninglessness, and depersonalized states in which one aspect of the self is repudiated. As we have seen, some critics of meditation[78,79] contend that it may intensify these forms of emptiness. According to Epstein, emptiness of these kinds is characterized as (1) a deficiency, an internalized remnant of emotional sustenance not given in childhood; (2) a defense—a more tolerable substitute for virulent rage or self-hatred; (3) a distortion of the development of a sense of self, in which one is unable to integrate diverse, conflicting self and object representations; and (4) a manifestation of inner conflict over idealized aspirations of the self, resulting when unconscious, idealized images of the self are not matched by actual experience, producing a sense of unreality or estrangement.

In contrast, the emptiness arising from Buddhist meditation is characterized by clarity, unimpededness, and openness, an experience that destroys the idea of a substantially existing, persisting, individual nature, as well as the substantiality of "outer" phenomena. Western psychologists observe that succumbing to the inevitable gap between actual and idealized experiences of the self leads to disavowing the actual self through a numbing sense of hollowness or unreality.

Buddhist psychology focuses upon uncovering the distorting idealizations that are at their root groundless, based on archaic, infantile fantasy. Meditators confronted by a sense of emptiness must not mistake this for Buddhist emptiness, Epstein writes, but must explore it and expose their beliefs in its concrete nature. Epstein argues that meditation can help the observing ego attend to whatever conflicting self- or object images arise without clinging or condemnation, thereby decreasing pathological emptiness. Thus Epstein concludes that while there are potential complications of using meditation as a therapeutic method, it may have a role in transforming narcissism, feelings of emptiness, and other forms of psychological suffering. Moreover, according to Epstein, where absorption and insight balance precisely and the voidness of the self is discerned, meditation can move beyond all residues of the ego ideal and of narcissism into the experience of enlightenment.

The writings of Engler, Wilber, and Epstein represent a new synthesis of the insights of psychoanalytic theory and Buddhist psychology. Each of them suggests that the question of whether meditation should be used in therapy requires a careful assessment of the patient's character structure and the way in which this may be affected by meditation.

The Jungian Critique of Meditation

C.G. Jung,[99] while considerably more open to religious or spiritual experiences than many psychoanalytic theoreticians, consistently advised Westerners against the use of Eastern meditation techniques. Westerners do not need more control and more power over themselves and over nature, he writes; we need to return to our own nature, not systems and methods to control or repress the natural man. Before Westerners can safely practice Yoga or meditation, Jung says, we must first know our own unconscious nature. Jung believes that psychotherapy is a more appropriate form of introversion for Westerners, one which permits the making conscious of unconscious components of the self. No discipline ought to be imposed on the unconscious, Jung emphasizes, for this would reinforce the "cramping" effect of consciousness. Instead, everything must be done to help the unconscious mind reach the conscious mind and free it of its rigidity. Thus Jung prescribes active imagination, in which one switches off consciousness and allows unconscious contents to unfold (pp.533–37).

Jung frequently cited the danger of being overwhelmed by the unconscious through improper use of Eastern psychotechnologies. He was particularly wary of the possibility of being thrust into an uncontrollable psychotic decompensation, or of becoming "inflated" as a result of identification with archetypal material emerging from the unconscious. In his view,[100] these pitfalls can be avoided by cultivating the ability to consciously understand this unconscious material with a critical intelligence (pp.224, 232–34).

Hillman[101] contends that spiritual disciplines have a fundamentally different purpose than psychotherapy, being oriented toward "peaks," ascent toward

pneumatic experience, or timeless and impersonal spirit, and often encouraging a turning away from nature, from community, from sleep and dreams, from personal and ancestral history, and from polytheistic complexity. Psychotherapy, in his view, is more a work of the soul than of the spirit, of depth as opposed to height, of "vales" rather than peaks. Therapy is "a digging in the ruins" of our personal history, fantasies, and emotional complexities as revealed by imagery emerging from the unconscious.

Jung and Hillman suggest the importance of finding value and meaning in the imaginal contents of the unconscious mind. In their view, many forms of meditation involve disidentification from the contents of consciousness, including the unconscious material that may emerge. It is important to recognize, however, that while their comments may apply to concentration methods, they may be inaccurate with respect to *vipassana* meditation, in which one must actively face and grapple with one's unconscious conflicts rather than transcend them. Nevertheless, one argument against the use of meditation in psychotherapy is that it may encourage a detached or negative attitude toward the contents of the unconscious, which are so significant in most forms of depth or insight psychotherapy.

Balancing Psychological and Spiritual Development

Jungian and psychoanalytic critiques suggest that using meditation in the context of therapy is no substitute for the exploration of psychological-emotional issues stemming from the individual's personal history that are the focus of most psychotherapies. Thus to be effective therapeutically, meditation would have to be pursued with an attitude of psychological sensitivity that does not pursue expanded states of consciousness as a form of "spiritual bypassing"[30] of emotional, interpersonal, or intrapsychic conflicts.

Russell[31] has attempted to define a model for a balanced approach to psychological and spiritual development. Russell searched the literature of Hindu Yoga and Theravadin, Abhidharma, and Vajrayana Buddhism and found that while these systems have great insight into conscious experiences and states of mind, they do not demonstrate any understanding of the unconscious, emotional conflicts, the existence of defensive mechanisms, or the operation of emotions like anxiety, anger or guilt operating outside of awareness. Nor do they acknowledge the effect of childhood trauma and parental treatment on the adult personality. While Eastern psychologies may occasionally refer to unconscious contents, they invariably view these as an intrusion and an obstacle to meditation that must be removed—for example, through concentration techniques for suppressing the unconscious.

Russell believes that therapy and meditation differ significantly with respect to their aims, their experiential areas, and their techniques. Meditation is not a method to alleviate psychopathology, Russell states, and "in recent years the expectation that meditation would be an effective psychotherapy has largely been

reversed." Meditation helps one achieve higher states of consciousness, but is not focused on resolving emotional problems. Therapy, however, aims at exploration of the unconscious, rather than the higher states of consciousness sought in meditation. Welwood[91] summed up this view when he wrote that the aim of psychotherapy is self-integration, while the aim of meditation is self-transcendence.

Meditation and therapy are also concerned with quite different aspects of consciousness. Therapy attempts to bring unconscious material into consciousness where it is explored, analyzed, interpreted, or expressed, while concentrative forms of meditation seek a state of pure consciousness without content. In addition, therapy generally uses uncovering techniques designed to elicit unconscious material and bring it into awareness, where it is actively engaged through free association, interpretation, and analysis of transference. Only in cases of severe psychopathology (in which structure building and the development of adequate personal defenses are necessary and desirable treatment goals) does therapy employ covering techniques. Eastern spiritual disciplines do not examine unconscious material closely, and often use covering methods to eliminate obstacles to attainment of higher states of consciousness. For example, Theravadin Buddhism uses precribed behaviors and concentration meditation directed toward particular themes to reduce emotions and desires that interfere with meditation. Concentrative meditation does not attend to emerging unconscious material, but rather utilizes selective inattention toward it. Moreover, although a technique like *vipassana* can be viewed as an uncovering method in that unconscious material does arise, this material is dealt with differently than in Western therapy. As Welwood[96] noted, in meditation feelings and emotions are not viewed as having any special importance, whereas in psychotherapy they are. In support of Russell's argument, however, let us note that although *vipassana does* stress examination of the nature of emotions, this is *not* the case in most forms of meditation.

Despite these observations, Russell believes that because meditation does not necessarily block unconscious material, there is not a complete opposition between meditation and therapy. He argues that spirituality and psychology are both concerned with enlarging the area of consciousness, either by bringing unconscious material into consciousness, or by exploring higher states of consciousness. These two approaches to expanded consciousness can be but are not necessariy explored simultaneously. Increased access to unconscious material does not always lead to an increase of higher states of consciousness. Alternatively, higher states of consciousness could occur without increased awareness of unconscious material. However it is also possible to increase awareness in both directions concurrently. Moreover, solving personal problems through awareness of unconscious material may improve meditation. Conversely, meditation may sensitize a person to the inner world and thereby increase openness to emergence of unconscious material in therapy. Russell concludes, therefore, that

therapy and meditation are not related in a linear sense, as Wilber's and Engler's developmental models seem to suggest, but can act synergistically to promote human growth. Thus Russell is in agreement with Epstein that meditation can be used therapeutically both to promote the personal healing customarily sought in therapy and the expansion of consciousness sought in contemplative contexts.

MEDITATION AND ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

As we have seen, meditation involves voluntary redirection of attention, a training in the self-control of attention that has some resemblance to other methods used in the behavioral sciences. However, this retraining of attention may lead not only to a physiological condition of deep relaxation, to increased skill in behavioral self-observation, to deepened access to the unconscious, but also to non ordinary states of consciousness. By alteration of the level and variety of sensory input (either through sensory reduction or sensory overload),[24] the brain's information-processing capacities are affected, perception is "deautomatized," and the "flow" experience arises, characterized by perceptual expansion and sharpening.

In some cases, meditation may lead to what Delmonte[73] and Noble[95] have called "transcendence," the experience of going beyond one's habitual perceptions or conceptions of self and world, culminating in peak experiences such as samadhi, satori, or enlightenment.

According to Noble[95]—summarizing the views of James[94]—such powerful thrusts into higher consciousness are characterized by ineffability (i.e., cannot be described accurately in words), a "noetic" quality of heightened clarity and understanding of reality, transiency, passivity, perception of the unity and interconnectedness of existence, and positive affect. Noble writes that spiritual disciplines like meditation have as their primary objective an openness to, and preparation for, the experience of transcendence. While such experiences may cause disruption of personal equilibrium in their aftermath (e.g., periods of withdrawal, isolation, confusion, self-doubt), Noble also notes evidence suggesting that, "Transcendence is significantly more productive of psychological health than pathology."

Noble reviews studies showing that subjects who have had peak experiences are less authoritarian and dogmatic, and more assertive, imaginative, self-sufficient, and relaxed.[95] Wuthnow[96] showed that peak experiences were positively associated with "introspective, self-aware, and self-assured personalities" (p.75) and with a greater sense of meaningfulness and purposefulness in life. Other studies[97] have shown that people having intense spiritual experiences are more likely to report a high level of psychological well-being. Noble also reviews evidence suggesting that

[T]he tendency to report such experience increased significantly with overall gain in psychological maturity scores. This finding is consistent with Hood's[98] suggestion that "only a strong ego can be relinquished non-pathologically" [Hood, p.69] and that to

have a transcendent experience, one must have developed the requisite psychological
strength to withstand it. Clearly, transcendence can present percipients with a total
existential shift in which their experience of self and of the world, their orientation in
space and time, their emotional attitudes and cognitive styles, and perhaps even their
entire personalities undergo a profound change.[59]

Noble's findings suggest that a further reason to use meditation in psychotherapy
is to precipitate such experiences of transcendence, and the "existential shifts"
that these may catalyze.

Deikman[16] has also noted that meditation produces major alterations in
perception of personal identity or definition of the self. He emphasizes the value
of meditation as a means of realizing the transiency of all mind content, and
bringing about a decreased preoccupation with one's personal problems and
suffering (p.142). Parry and Jones[79] write that meditation facilitates the recogni-
tion that "belief in the reality of a separate self, rather than enhancing well-being,
actually leads to suffering" (p.177). Walley[100] writes that meditation practice
provides an antidote to "self-grasping" and "the self-cherishing attitude" which,
according to Buddhist teachings, cloud the inherent purity, warmth, openess,
and intelligence that are the qualities of our natural state of mind (p.196). These
writers suggest that meditation may offer a fundamentally different approach to
mental health than that used by most psychotherapists. Whereas therapy tradi-
tionally focuses on the individual's problems and attempts to construct a more
healthy self-image, a meditatively informed therapy would promote realization of
the transiency and insubstantiality of all identity constructs as well as the cultiva-
tion of equanimity, compassion, and friendliness toward oneself and others[3]
(p.49). The extent to which such realizations of "no-self" and consequent turning
of attention away from the problems of the personal self is in line with the goals of
psychotherapy, and exactly how these would affect the course and outcome of
psychotherapy remains to be determined through further empirical and phenom-
enological studies.

CONCLUSION

Meditation is a multidimensional phenomenon that may be useful in a clinical
setting in a variety of ways. First, meditation is associated with states of physiolog-
ical relaxation that can be utilized to alleviate stress, anxiety, and other physical
symptoms. Secondly, meditation brings about cognitive shifts that can be applied
to behavioral self-observation and management, and to understanding limiting
or self-destructive cognitive patterns.

Meditation may also permit deepened access to the unconscious. However,
meditation by itself may not be an effective means of reflecting upon and giving
meaning to the previously submerged material that may come to consciousness.
Here the interpretive schemas developed by psychoanalytic, Jungian, and other
psychodynamic theorists may prove more useful. Conversely, meditation tech-

niques like *vipassana* focus attention on the manner in which unconscious conflicts are being processed and recreated in the mind on a moment-to-moment basis. Thus, *vipassana* offers the possibility of not just *understanding* such conflicts conceptually, but of actually penetrating and gradually dismantling them through meditative insight.

I have noted the importance of assessing the developmental stage of the individual before prescribing meditation as an adjunct to therapy, and in choosing an appropriate method. While some, such as Engler, argue that meditation may intensify prior deficits in self-structure in ways that may be deleterious, others, e.g., Epstein, contend that meditation can actually help resolve structural personality disorders commonly treated by therapists.

Our discussion has suggested that meditation may offer the possibility of development beyond what most therapy can offer, but proceeds more effectively when certain egoic issues such as self-esteem, livelihood, and intimacy and sexuality have been at least to some extent resolved.[10,16,66] Therapy may be a more effective means of developing ego strength and exploring unconscious conflicts, relationship issues, and so forth, especially when a preoccupation with these concerns is a cause of sufficient anxiety that focused meditation may not be possible.[66,90] Here Bacher's[23] contention that a sequential approach to the use of meditation in therapy may be most fitting appears to be supported.

I believe that meditation can make a significant contribution to the deep transformation of personality sought in psychotherapy. Nevertheless, Western therapists will need to experiment to learn how these methods can be most useful to them. For the therapeutic effects of different meditation techniques may vary greatly. Concentration methods may allow the patient to feel inner balance, calm, and a ground of being that transcends the continuous flux of thoughts and emotions, and that inspires confidence. *Vipassana* meditation may promote transformative insight into maladaptive patterns of mental and emotional activity. But all of these methods have the capacity, as Deatherage suggested, to help make the patient more self-reliant and less preoccupied with transference to the therapist. Meditation can in some cases be useful in promoting social adjustment, behavioral change, ego development, and so forth by generating a mindfulness and inner peace that leads to greater efficiency in work, openness to feelings, and satisfaction in daily life. Moreover, meditation can enable the patient to view emotions with dispassion, acceptance, and loving kindness, to transmute neurosis into a spiritual path, and to taste an inner freedom "beyond any identity structure".[101] I think that the use of meditation mainly makes sense in a therapy that deliberately understands itself as contemplative or transpersonal; for meditation's ultimate goal is to evoke the higher potentials of consciousness, and experiences of a spaciousness beyond the cognitive structures and constructs of the self that conventional psychotherapy seeks merely to modify.

SUMMARY

This article has explored research to date concerning the efficacy of introducing meditation into the therapeutic setting. I have presented the views of proponents and critics of the relaxation model of meditation and of theories describing the cognitive changes brought about by meditation—for example, Deikman's theory of the deautomatization of consciousness and Delmonte's view that meditation may be utilized to bring about "ascendence," "descendence," and "transcendence." After summarizing psychoanalytic and Jungian arguments against meditation, the writings of several transpersonal psychologists have been cited to demonstrate the differences in how psychotherapy and meditative disciplines conceptualize personal identity, work with unconscious material, and view the experience of emptiness.

I conclude that the question of whether meditation should be used in therapy can be answered only by considering what therapeutic goals are being sought in a particular instance and whether or not meditation can reasonably be expected to facilitate achievement of those goals. Meditation may, in some cases, be compatible with, and effective in, promoting the aims of psychotherapy—for example, cognitive and behavioral change, or access to the deep regions of the personal unconscious. In other cases, it may be strongly contraindicated, especially when the therapeutic goal is to strengthen ego boundaries, release powerful emotions, or work through complex relational dynamics—ends which may be more effectively reached through standard psychotherapeutic methods than through meditation. Meditation may be of great value, however, through its capacity to awaken altered states of consciousness that may profoundly reorient an individual's identity, emotional attitude, and sense of wellbeing and purpose in life.

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10 copi

The Maha Prajna Paramita Hrdaya Sutra

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva
when practicing deeply the Prajna Paramita
perceives that all five skandhas are empty
and is saved from all suffering and distress.

Shariputra,
form does not differ from emptiness,
emptiness does not differ from form.
That which is form is emptiness,
that which is emptiness form.

The same is true of feelings,
perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

Shariputra,
all dharmas are marked with emptiness;
they do not appear or disappear,
are not tainted or pure,
do not increase or decrease.

Therefore, in emptiness no form, no feelings,
perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;
no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch,
no object of mind;
no realm of eyes
and so forth until no realm of mind consciousness.

No ignorance and also no extinction of it,
and so forth until no old age and death
and also no extinction of them.

No suffering, no origination,
no stopping, no path, no cognition,
also no attainment with nothing to attain.

The Bodhisattva depends on Prajna Paramita
and the mind is no hindrance;

without any hindrance no fears exist.
Far apart from every perverted view one dwells in Nirvana.

In the three worlds
all Buddhas depend on Prajna Paramita
and attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

Therefore know that Prajna Paramita
is the great transcendent mantra,
is the great bright mantra,
is the utmost mantra,
is the supreme mantra
which is able to relieve all suffering
and is true, not false.
So proclaim the Prajna Paramita mantra,
proclaim the mantra which says:

gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha
gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha
gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.

The Bodhisattva as Wonder-worker

Luis O. Gómez

We owe it to Prof. Edward Conze to have contributed positively to break the spell of "Buddhist rationalism" among Western students of the Buddhist texts, when he insisted, in his *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, on the compatibility and frequent coexistence of magical belief and Buddhist philosophy.[1] But it is easy to forget that not all Buddhists reacted in the same way to the unquestioned belief in magic. It is crucial for our understanding of Buddhist thought, especially in the Mahāyāna, to realize that to the Buddhist thinker (if not to the populace) the feats of the wandering *māyākāra* were not only facts of life, but also perfect examples of both trickery and skill.[2] Without denying the obvious fondness of many Buddhists for "psychic powers" and "wonder-working" as proofs or fruits of spiritual advancement, in the following pages I shall examine some aspects of the Buddhist use of the concept of thaumaturgic powers as an image for the true face of "reality" (deception, trickery), and as a figure for the skillful activity of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

<div align="center">I</div>

Perhaps one of the most "rationalistic" of the *Nikāya* passages on wonder-working is the introduction to the *Kevaṭṭa-sutta*, where Gotama discusses three kinds of marvels (*pāṭihāriya*): thaumaturgy (*iddhi*), mind reading (*ādesanā*), and the marvel of instruction (*anusāsanī*).[3] The Buddha rejects the first two with strong words, and points out the merits of the one marvel that he advocates and practices: teaching the Dharma. The reason why the first two are unacceptable to the Buddha as true "marvels" is quite simple and straightforward: they are not the exclusive property of the enlightened, for other people could come into possession of these powers by other means, such as the magical arts of Gandhāra (*gandhārī nāma vijjā*). The significance of this passage can be readily grasped if one remembers that even before the Buddhist claimed to possess magical powers, many other, if not all, wandering ascetics had presented their wonder-working abilities as proof of their spiritual

achievement. In this respect, therefore, Buddhist and non-Buddhist were indistinguishable. That this was so can be seen from such absurd situations as the thaumaturgic impasse created at Uruvelā when the Buddha tried to impress Kassapa the ascetic.[4]

Other passages in the *Nikāyas* show that the ancient Buddhists tried to characterize the marvel of Buddhahood in terms less bizarre than those used by the rivals of Buddhism in praise of the prowess of their own holy men.[5] Perhaps a statistical study will show that such passages are outnumbered by the more outlandish, unabashed depictions of Buddhas as mere magicians, but one thing is clear, that with respect to the Buddhas, magical prowess is often a figure of other, less palpable, but more fundamental skills.

In a passage reminiscent of the *Kevaṭṭa-sutta*, Lin-chi, Huang-po's witty disciple, discusses the *shen-t'ung* (*abhijñā*) of a Buddha:[6]

> You say that Buddhas have six marvelous powers which are inconceivable. The gods, the immortals, the asuras and the powerful pretas also have supernatural powers, but, must we [then] consider them Buddhas? Followers of the way, do not err. The asuras, for instance, when they fought Indra, the Lord of the gods, and were defeated, the eighty-four thousand of them all hid within the fiber of a lotus stem. Were they not then true sages? These powers which I have just mentioned are mere powers resulting from karma, depending on causes for support. These are not like the marvelous powers of Buddhas. [A Buddha's powers are:] entering the realm of form without being deluded by form, entering the realm of sound without being deluded by sound, entering the realm of smell without being deluded by smell, entering the realm of taste without being deluded by taste, entering the realm of touch without being deluded by touch, entering the realm of mental factors (*fa: dharma*) without being deluded by mental factors. Therefore, when one has penetrated into the mark of emptiness of these six: form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental factors, they cannot tie down the man of the way who has no support. Although he is an outflow of the five skandhas, he moves on this earth with supernatural power.

But, interestingly enough, in the same passage Lin-chi suggests the image of magical production to indicate the opposite of detachment, that is, the state of delusion.[7]

Followers of the way, do not err. All *dharmas,* worldly and supramun-
dane, are without self nature, without birth. There is only the word
"empty", and this word is also empty.
. . . Though all this does exist, it is all finding support in the realm
of [magical] transformation . . . All you are doing is fashioning pat-
terns and appearances out of illusory transformations . . .

In this apparent ambiguity Lin-chi I-hsüan is following an established
pattern in Mahāyāna that can be traced, in his case, to the *Avataṁsaka*
tradition. In his discourses, he has used repeatedly the terminology of
the *Hua-yen ching.* Perhaps the most transparent case of Lin-chi's use of
Hua-yen imagery is the passage defining the term *chên-chêng chien-chieh,*
"genuine insight" (not *samyagdṛṣṭi,* which would be *chêng-chien*):[8]

[There is genuine insight] only when you under all circumstances enter
into the common man as well as into the saint, enter into impurity as
well as into purity, enter all Buddha fields, enter the Tower of Maitreya,
enter the Vairocana *Dharmadhātu,* [and] in each and every place
display all the Buddhafields, develop, bring them to fulfillment, dwell
in them, bring them to end, lead them to emptiness. In a Buddha's
coming into the world, in his turning the wheel of Dharma and all the
more in his entering into Nirvāṇa, no characteristic is to be seen:
though you seek his life and death, you are not able to find it. Indeed,
you will enter the birthless *Dharmadhātu,* go everywhere wandering
through the Buddhafields, or enter the Lotus-Womb World [of
Vairocana], and completely perceive all dharmas as characterized by
emptiness, all [*dharmas*] as false *dharmas.* [If] there is but one [of
you who are] listening to the *dharma* [here] who forms no support [in
the *dharma*], he is the mother of all Buddhas. Therefore, a Buddha is
born of no support. If you understand no-support, then, likewise, you
will not seek the Buddha. If you are able to see in this way, that is
genuine insight.

This passage is reminiscent of the *Suvikrāntavikrāmi,* where all the
powers and virtues of a Buddha are said to be rooted precisely in no-sup-
port (*apratiṣṭhāna,* the *wu-i* of Lin-chi).[9] But Lin-chi's words are in fact
an allusion to the *Avataṁsaka,* specifically to the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra.*
The parallelism goes beyond the obvious fact that both texts share a
principle common to many forms of Buddhist thought: true insight is

synonymous with complete detachment. In the discourse preceding the one quoted above, the *Lin-chi lu* contains a direct attack on the Hua-yen school.[10] In that passage to enter the *Dharmadhātu* and manifest Buddha-bodies is of no worth in itself if the Bodhisattva "of Perfect and Instant Enlightenment" still delights in holiness and despises the life of common mortals. In contrast to this statement, Lin-chi now uses the *Avataṁsaka Sūtra* itself to illustrate his teaching of perfect detachment. To "enter the Tower of Maitreya", to "enter the Vairocana *Dharmadhātu*", to "enter the Lotus Womb World", and to become "the mother of all Buddhas", are all phrases from the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*.[11]

It is particulary significant that Lin-chi, having spoken about the magical powers of the Buddha as a metaphor for the Buddha's detachment should have also referred to the "Tower of Maitreya". This is an allusion to the *Maitreya-vimokṣa* section of the *Gaṇḍavyūha,* a passage that constitutes the climax of the sūtra. The message of this veritable epitome of the *Gv* is in fact conterminous with the symbolism of the Tower of Maitreya. The Tower is a metaphor for nonduality, that is, the state beyond both duality and unity, which is true and complete non-attachment. The true intent of the image, as Lin-chi evidently perceived, is perhaps not to depict factually a supramundane realm of supernal apparitions, but to render figuratively what to the Buddhist is a very concrete inner experience.

However, the symbolism of the Tower can be interpreted as the vehicle for more than one ideological element of Buddhism. And some of these elements, the ideological building blocks of the *whole* sūtra, reflect a conceptual world which is in more than one instance quite foreign to Lin-chi (or, for that matter, to the Hua-yen masters). An investigation of some of these elements hopefully will clarify the role of thaumaturgic beliefs in Buddhist doctrine.

II

The *Gv* owes its characteristic flavor not so much to its style and narrative, as to the novel interpretation of traditional Indian Mahāyāna doctrines which it suggests. I would like to surmise that we can understand the sūtra, and, within it, prominently the *Maitreya-vimokṣa* passage as a bold, though highly orthodox reformulation of basic Buddhist ideas. There is, of course, no intent to ascribe an argumentative or polemical character to the sūtra. It would be too much to expect from the sūtra an explicit formulation of the text's true intention. One cannot

expect much argumentation or dialectical action. There is no more drama than that of the imagery of the miracle-filled story itself.

Nevertheless, the sūtra's originality cannot be denied. The central doctrines of the *Gv* represent an original elaboration and combination of at least two notions common to all Buddhists: the traditional belief in the "psychic powers" attained through the exercise of asceticism, and the almost axiomatic thesis that all entities are pure appearance.

The first notion constitutes the mythico-magical framework and is of a rather simple logic, although its history and rhetoric are somewhat complicated: we are asked to accept as a fact the existence of the thaumaturgic powers of *ṛddhi*, specifically the power of *vikurvaṇa*, that is, the capacity to effect, by sheer psychic power, the transformation, displacement or multiplication of the human body. The ideological branch of the sūtra is rather subtle, but we will confine ourselves exclusively to the metaphysical counterpart to the *ṛddhi*: i.e., the doctrine of radical illusion. However, it will not be possible to avoid the related question of the substratum for illusion; in this the *Gv*, perhaps inconsistently, hints at a strict, but rather innovative, theory of total conditionality as interdependence, beside a rather nebulous doctrine of the *Dharmadhātu* as the ground of conditionality.

As regards the doctrines of illusion, the *Gv* shares with other sūtras of the Mahāyāna the ontological equivalence or ultimate convertibility of phenomena and absolute. It makes ample use of imagery from the Buddhistic reservoir material: the world is pure appearance, empty, and, as such, is like empty space; enlightenment consists in traversing this emptiness as birds glide through the sky, clinging to nothing, leaving no trace upon the essentially pure firmament. It would heartily agree with the doctrine professed by the **Samādhirāja,** according to which "Awakening is seen through form and form is seen in awakening," and "all *dharmas* are by their own nature equal to Nirvāṇa."[12] Nevertheless, the Mahāyāna avers a fundamental difference at another level, which may be called the existential level; *phenomena* are empty, but the absolute is emptiness, the fact and actuality of detachment: "Just as the wind blows swiftly through space, detached, the *Dharmatā* of a Buddha moves about in the Lokadhātus." The phenomenal realm is like empty space: "As the firmament, or intermediate space, so is the characteristic of *dharmas*."[13] But no *dharma* can be considered a way to the absolute emptiness without true realization. Though all *dharmas* be empty, only the Bodhisattvas who stand in the absolute are able to

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enjoy the freedom of empty space: "As birds do not leave a path in space, thus do Bodhisattvas awaken to the true nature of Awakening. The sky is said to be ungraspable, in it there is nothing to grasp. This is the true nature of *dharmas,* ungraspable like they sky."[14] The realization, acceptance and *mastery* of this very ungraspability is enlightenment, perfect freedom.

The *Samādhirāja* elaborates:[15]

> Without a self-nature are these *dharmas,* no self-nature is apprehended in them. This is indeed the sphere of those yogis who apply themselves to the enlightenment of Buddhas. He who knows *dharmas* in this way does not become attached to *dharmas* He who is not attached to *dharmas* is the true knower of the apperception of *dharmas.* The Bodhisattva who is a *tāyin* does not generate any *dharmas* in the mind. He who does not generate apperception of *dharmas,* does not conceive of *Buddhadharmas.* . . . Knowing that samsara is empty, the Bodhisattva is not attached. They will act for the sake of enlightenment, but their conduct is not apprehended.

The *Samādhirāja* then adds the *Gv* 's favorite image, using a stock phrase of the Mahāyāna:[16]

> It is as when a well trained magician displays his magic, showing forms of many kinds, yet no form can be apprehended. Nor should one think of apprehending the unapprehendable; in apprehension [itself] there is no apprehension. This knowledge is like a magical apparition, yet it does not rest on appearances.

Thus, the ultimate purpose of the doctrine of illusion appears to be paradoxically to offer a foundation for the theory of salvation from illusion: a negative view of knowledge and conduct in which non-attachment is reified as illusory thought and action, and thus identified with the world's emptiness. To paraphrase the classic Madhyamaka dictum: "a knot made with air is loosened only by air."[17]

Consistently enough, the Mahāyāna will eventually turn to this very illusion and reify it as the empty foundation from which derive and in which unite both worldly illusion and enlightenment. The *Gv*, though still far from the Vijñānavādin thirst for an ultimate metaphysical foundation, has clearly begun the quest for the ground of Buddhahood.

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Empty space is not merely the absence of all characteristics: it is the background of illusion as well as the very source for the negative essence of both illusion and release.

True nothingness was never the aim of Mahāyāna, yet the doctrine of illusion, and its concomitant similes, dangerously suggests such an extreme. But equally fearful to the Buddhist is the belief in an ultimate immutable ground. The fragile boat of Buddhist philosophy must drift between Scylla and Charybdis. The *Gv* will seek such a middle course in the very doctrine of magical productions, which is a corollary of the illusionistic ontology of Buddhism, and at the same time reflects a common folk belief acceptable to its audience. The ontological equivalent for the empty space of the simile, the sphere of action for the Bodhisattva's wonder-working (that is to say, his conduct aimed at enlightenment and the salvation of all living beings) is here called the *Dharmadhātu*. In the ninth *janmabhūmi*, the Bodhisattva will acquire this "unattached field of action which is the excellent *Dharmadhātu*".[18]

The rambling, desultory style of the sūtra, coupled with its lack of concern for the clarification of philosophical issues contributes to a very obscure picture of the meaning of *Dharmadhātu*. Still, a few passages point to its function as, on the one hand, the ground upon which develops the Bodhisattva's conduct, his career as an instrument in the world's eventual release from suffering, and, on the other hand, as the foundation, or at times, the essential nature of wordly existence itself.

Thus, Śākyamuni's spouse, Gopā, is said to be able to penetrate and comprehend fully "the oceans of conduct of the Bodhisattva within the whole *Dharmadhātu* of Vairocana".[19] By this very faculty she is enabled to comprehend fully the undifferentiated varieties of Bodhisattva conduct of "all Bodhisattvas in all Lokadhātus, [all of which] amount to the [pure] space element, [and] ultimately consist in the *Dharmadhātu*".[20]

To attain Tathāgatahood in the tenth *bhūmi* is, according to the *Gv*, to enter into all the paths in the divisions of the *Dharmadhātu*'s expanse, (*dharmadhātutalabhedanayeṣu*).[21] Only one attempt is made in the whole sūtra at a definition of this ground and aim of the Bodhisattva's conduct and even this is only an indirect and philosophically unsatisfactory description. The night goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsaṁbhavatejaḥsrī describes the characteristics of the *Dharmadhātu* to the pilgrim Sudhana:[22]

... In its ten aspects I here behold, follow, and flow into the *Dhar-*

madhātu, whose foundation is the equipment of good roots. Which are these ten aspects? (1) I follow the inscrutable *Dharmadhātu*, because I have acquired the intense light of gnosis. (2) I follow the *Dharmadhātu* without ends nor middle, in order to display the magical transformations of all the Tathāgatas. (3) I follow the limitless *Dharmadhātu*, in order to fulfill the task of veneration and service to the Tathāgatas who move throughout the Buddha fields. (4) I enter into the *Dharmadhātu* of unattainable limits, in order to manifest the Bodhisattva's conduct in the oceans of all the world levels. (5) I enter into the indivisible *Dharmadhātu*, in order to penetrate into the sphere of the Tathāgata's unadulterated gnosis. (6) I enter the *Dharmadhātu* contained in the one still point, in order to penetrate into the sphere of the Tathāgata's voice which adapts according to the dispositions of living beings. (7) I enter the truly immaculate *Dharmadhātu*, in order to penetrate into the goal of the original vow which seeks to train the whole world. (8) I enter the *Dharmadhātu* which conforms to sameness with the whole world, in order to enter the flow of the Bodhisattva's perfect course. (9) I enter the whole *Dharmadhātu*, which is one single ornament, in order to penetrate into the ornaments of the magical transformations of the Bodhisattva's perfect course. (10) I enter into the imperishable *Dharmadhātu*, in order to [enter] the imperishable Nature of All Dharmas (*dharmatā*), the purity that pervades the *Dharmadhātu* with all the wholesome [roots].

In these ten aspects, Son of Good Family, I behold, follow, and flow into the whole *Dharmadhātu*, in order to accumulate the equipment of the wholesome roots, in order to penetrate into the Nobility of the Buddhas, in order to penetrate into the unthinkable sphere of the Buddhas.

Thus, the concept of the *Dharmadhātu* appears to combine and represent at least six fundamental doctrines of Mahāyāna, which, although interrelated and inseparable, may conveniently be divided into three categories: (A) the foundation: 1. *dharmatā*, the fundamental purity (*prakṛtiviśuddhi*) of all *dharmas* because they are unoriginated; (B) the goal: 2. *buddhatā*, the object or sphere (*viṣaya*) of a Buddha's gnosis (*jñāna*), including the scope and range (*gocara*) of his actions; (C) the path: the *bodhicaryā* as 3. cultivation of the ultimate, unthinkable object of enlightenment, 4. accumulation of the wholesome roots, 5. bringing all living beings to enlightenment, and 6. manifestation of magical pro-

ductions. It is important to realize that *Dharmadhātu* is synonymous with any of these aspects of the Dharma. Thus, the true form of all *dharmas* is, in spite of its essential purity (*svabhāvavimala*), identical with the world (*sarvajagatsamatānugata*); in spite of its intrinsic unity (*ekotibhavagatam . . . ekālaṁkaram*), it is the realm of the multifarious magical transfromations of the Tathāgatas and Bodhisattvas, the whole show of magic reflecting the Bodhisattva's perfect conduct. Moreover, this conduct of the Bodhisattvas, understood as their *ṛddhi* power pervading the *Dharmadhātu*, leads all beings to enlightenment, to full awareness of the *Dharmadhātu* in all its aspects.

Magic, illusionistic metaphysics, and path philosophy meet in the doctrine of the *Dharmadhātu*. The use of magical powers as a means of proselytizing is already attested in the Mahāyāna sūtras, which add the metaphor of magic to represent worldly illusion, but the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is unique in that it attempts to bring together these two Buddhist adaptations of the common belief in magic availing itself of the concept of the *Dharmadhātu*. The *Dharmadhātu's* original purity corresponds to the Bodhisattva's pure mind, which discerns illusion from reality, yet patiently conforms to the former. The *Dharmadhātu* as Buddhahood is the whole range of the Bodhisattva's knowledge and skill as a wonderworker (in this sense, the Bodhisattva, though *one* with the *Dharmadhātu*, works *within* the *Dharmadhātu*). The difference between the Bodhisattva and the common wonder-worker is two-fold: (1) his magical creations are not merely apparitions within the "reality" of our everyday world, rather, they are that very reality as manifested to the enlightened, therefore, ultimately one with the *Dharmadhātu*. (2) His creations, though conforming to the delusion of his audience, are presented in order to reveal the true nature of the delusion, unlike the magician who rests content with the success of his deception.

The *Gv* goes one step further by proposing that the emptiness, and therefore non-substantiality, of the *Dharmadhātu* is to be understood in terms of the doctrine of reflection or interpenetration of all phenomena. Although this doctrine will flower in the Hua-yen under a different garb, in India it was intimately related to the belief in the *ṛddhi* of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It was most probably an explicit reference to the thaumaturge's purported capacity to manifest within a small object, or within his own body, larger objects, often even an infinite number of such objects, or vice-versa, to multiply a given object and project it on other objects. But, in terms of Buddhist doctrine, the doctrine of uni-

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versal reflection is not only a metaphysical and magical belief, but the metaphorical depiction of the enlightenment experience. In order to understand this conception, however, it will be necessary to delve deeper into the *Gv* 's use of the accepted belief in the magical powers of the hierophant.

According to Asaṅga, in his description of the various extraordinary powers which result from the Bodhisattva's *samādhi,* these powers (*ṛddhibala*) are divided into two types—powers of transformation (*pāriṇāmikī ṛddhi*) and powers of creation (*nairmāṇikī ṛddhi*)[23] The first group includes, among others, the power to produce fire and emit rays of light of many colors (*jvalana*), the sight of which allays all suffering (*raśmi-pramokṣa*); the power to produce light that pervades every corner of the universe (*spharaṇa*); the power to make everything visible anywhere in an instant (*vidarśana*); the power to change the form of things (*anyathībhavakaraṇa*); the power to introduce any object, however large, into his own body(*sarvarūpakāyapraveśana*); and the power to appear and disappear anywhere (*āvirbhāvatirobhāva*). In the class of *nairmāṇikī ṛddhi,* the most important subtype is the capacity to create or project bodies (*kāyanirmāṇa*), one of the most important transfigurational faculties (*vikurvaṇa*) in the scheme of the *Gv.* A Buddha or a Bodhisattva can create illusory bodies, similar or dissimilar to the creator. These bodies are illusory, or, rather, "like magical creations"(*māyopamanirmāṇa*), insofar as they exist for the sole purpose of being contemplated by living beings, yet they are real(*bhūtanirmāṇa*) because they speak, drink, take food, etc. Still another subtype of the *pāriṇāmikī ṛddhi* class, also called a *vikurvaṇa* by the *Gv,* is that of producing the vision of all the Buddha-fields of the universe in one limited location (*ārambaṇa*), be this one speck of dust, or a hair pore on the skin of the Bodhisattva.

Such powers are the fruit of the realization that all the realms of beings are like a magic production, that all the Tathāgatas are like mere reflections. This understanding and power are attained by the practice of the course of the Bodhisattva (*bodhisattvacaryā*), that is, the Perfect Noble Course (*samantabhadracaryā*). As explained repeatedly in the *Gv,* this course consists in the practice and development of a series of trance-like states in which a certain vision, or rather thaumaturgic manifestation appears as the embodiment of a liberating truth (*vimokṣa*). Each chapter of the *Gv* contains one such trance or series of them, and each trance embodies one or more of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism as understood by the *Gv.* The *vimokṣas* produce illusory manifes-

tations, as unreal as a mirage, yet constituting doors to release. In this way, magical and metaphysical beliefs are blended, with greater or lesser success, throughout the sūtra.

The doctrine of illusion appearing in traditional Mahāyāna garb, is contained in the stereotyped list, already found in the Hīnayāna (though interpreted there in its "weak" sense) of the ten comparisons (*daśopamā*). All *dharmas* are like acts of magic, like a mirage, like an echo, like a city of the Gandharvas, like a dream, like a shadow, like the image reflected on a mirror, like magical creations.[24] The first, ninth and tenth similes clearly suggest the *Gv* 's view of illusoriness.

The basis for the initial combination of the doctrines of *ṛddhi* and the ten comparisons is to be found obviously in the fact that the *ṛddhi*, as specific instances of thaumaturgy, can be considered to touch at several points the sphere of the magician (first and tenth similes). But, beyond this patent correspondence, there is the fact that *ṛddhi* is the mastery of illusion, at a purely worldly level, it is true, but corresponding to the higher mastery involved in understanding and living the purport of the ten similes while continuing to labor in the world of illusion for the sake of living beings. Since all *dharmas* are mere illusions, the *Gv* seems to reason, the illusory creations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are as real as anything else. And even more, these creations somehow are nought but reflections (*pratibhāsa*) of appearances which are in fact themselves reflections. Thus, a Buddha's transformations, the thaumaturgical displays of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, constitute their iconic preaching about illusion and its equally groundless substratum, since the very *Buddhadharmatā* which makes possible the manifestation of the *vikurvāna* is itself an appearance brought forth out of compassion as an expedient to save living beings. Thus, the *Gv* develops the view, expressed in other Mahāyāna sūtras, that the very illusoriness of the world is the motive and foundation for the possibility of *ṛddhi*; as stated by Sudhana in his praise of Pramuditanayanajagadvirocanā:[25]

Knowing that the world lacks selfhood, lacks a master, is false, deluded, always in error, you train the world by the power of *ṛddhi*, displaying your mastery over numberless bodies.

The connection between thaumaturgic mythology and the Buddhist doctrine of salvation is often obscured by the profuseness of the elaborate imagery of the *Gv*, the abundant descriptions of feats of wonder-

working, magical powers, supernal manifestations and emanations. In a few passages, however, the sūtra is rather explicit: thus, Maitreya explains to Sudhana the parallelism, though in a slightly different connection:[26]

> Son of Good Family, as all the formulas in the art of magic lack a tangible form or appearance, yet display all the forms of magical creation by merely arousing thoughts, even so the production of the thought of all-knowledge has no tangible form or appearance, yet it displays the entire *Dharmadhātu* by means of manifestations ornamented with all the virtues, and this by the sheer force of the arousing of thought.

The link between *ṛddhi* power and world illusion, perhaps tinged with a slight suggestion of a self-subsisting metaphysical ground, is beautifully highlighted in the famous *cittasvabhāva* passage, in which Sudhana praises the Dharma and Form Bodies of the night goddess Praśāntarutasāgaravatī:[27]

> You have attained the unshakable, you are faultless and detached; the noble Wisdom-Eye has been purified by you, by means of which you perceive in a speck of dust, Buddhas, so many as all the particles of dust [in the universe], producing magical transformations. For your body is the Dharma Body, and your mind, made of wisdom, is detached. You who reflect splendour in all directions, emit endless light into the world. Having understood that endless action arises from the mind, that from action [arises] the whole multifarious world, that the world's true nature is mind, you display your own bodies conforming to the world. Having understood that this world is like a dream and that all Buddhas are like [mere] reflections, that all *dharmas* are like an echo, you move in the world without attachment. In an instant you show your own body even to [all] human beings in the three times. Yet, in your mind there is no process of duality and you preach the Dharma in all [the four] quarters. For the scope of your *vimokṣa*-conduct are the endless seas in one particle of dust, measureless seas of living beings, as well as oceans of *Sugatas* without end nor middle.

The world relies on duality; enlightened beings, at one with the Dhar-

ma Body, are free from duality, and in their freedom they recreate the illusion of the world's duality for the sake of living beings. This is, according to the *Gv* the sole meaning of the Bodhisattva's course, the mysterious activity (*gambhīracesta*) of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.[28] As seen from the vantage point of an advanced Bodhisattva (in this case Gopā, Śākyamuni's own wife):[29]

In all directions I perceive endless, marvelous fields purified in every way. Yet, while seeing them my mind is not attached to them, nor is it in any way hindered by defilements. And in these very fields I see all the Buddhas in their seats of enlightenment, and in one instant of thought I perceive the endless oceans of their shining halos. In one instant of thought I also enter into the oceans of assemblies [which gather around] them without finding obstruction [in their movement], and I attain to all their *samādhis*, and all their inmeasurable ways of manifestation and release (*vimoksa*). I uphold their all-inclusive course of conduct, and enter all its paths and levels without exception. At every moment I enter into infinite vast seas of countless vows. Though I be contemplating the body of the Superior Man, and following his course during endless *kalpas*, I will still be unable to reach the limit of the transformations He displays in every single hair pore [of his body]. Yet I perceive the seas of fields in one of His hair pores. Beyond reckoning, [these seas of fields all] include [their own] Base of Wind, and Great Waters, they are pervaded by Fire, contain Earth Bodies. There are bodily forms without end nor middle, conforming to the various kinds of body humors, occupying different stations, with a plurality of shapes, approaching multifarious ways and levels [of conduct]. In each one of these measureless seas of fields I perceive elements which are ineffable. I see in them human beings trained by the works of Dharma, following the Jinas. But this is not the [Buddha's] bodily action, nor is it the activity of His speech, or His mind, it is nought but His *rddhi* power, His various transformation forms following the all-inclusive course of conduct through many *kalpas*.

By the fact that their own bodies reflect all things and are reflected in them, by sheer *rddhi* power, by the effortless force of their *samādhi*, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas set beings in the path of Awakening. By presenting the whole *Dharmadhātu* in one atomic particle through the power of reflection, they are able to reveal the true nature of all *dharmas*

without effort. For a Buddha's thaumaturgic display of endless reflections—his production of illusory worlds and bodies—corresponds to the true nature of the world.

The power to hint at, or actually manifest the world's illusory character through the creation of apparitional beings lies within the reach of only Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the highest stages (ninth *janmabhūmi*) who have bodies born of the very *Dharmadhātu*.[30] In other words, the capacity to be the immutable mirror of mutable reality belongs to the sphere of only those who have achieved identity with the very foundation of all *dharma*s (*dharmadhātvasambheda*). Because of this identity with the *Dharmadhātu,* the Awakened possess two bodies, a Dharma Body (*dharmaśarīra*) and Form Body (*rūpaśarīra*), corresponding to the two aspects of the *Dharmadhātu:* the undivided (*asambhinnadharmadhātu*) and its "manifestations" (*dharmadhātutalabheda*).[31] The Dharma Body is the very essence of Buddhahood, incorporeal, at peace, nondual. That this body is the *Dharmadhātu* itself becomes clear in Sudhana's description of Vasantī's Dharma Body:[32]

> Your Dharma Body is completely pure, the same in three times, free of discrimination, *into which the whole world flows,* comes into existence and ceases to be without impediment.

This body represents the *totality* of all *dharma*s which constitute a Buddha, seen in their identity with non-essence. A non-essence which, to be consistent with its lack of determination, acquiesces to all transformations, but it is in its role as undifferentiated, pure, foundation that it is properly called *Dharmadhātu* or *Dharmaśarīra,* as the basis or root for the virtues of Buddhas, and as the metaphysical foundation behind appearances. The Form Body, on the other hand, is the *aggregate* of all the qualities of perfection pertaining to a Buddha, and the aggregate of illusory transformations which the *Dharmadhātu* undergoes in its process of manifestation and salvation. It is the perceptible body, or bodies of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, of infinite forms and manifestations. The Form Body represents the power of transformation (*vikurvaṇa*) inherent in the (unchanging) *Dharmadhātu*, the power by which the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas train the world in the foundation of all *dharma*s. With this body they pervade all worlds and display the reflections of each world in all other worlds within every speck of dust.

Going beyond the common ground of Mahāyāna, the *Gv* is trying to

establish an equation between the true nature of *dharmas*, the *Dharma-dhātu*, the ultimate essence of Buddhahood, and the Bodhisattva's course (*caryā*) represented by the functions of the Form Body. To this purpose the sūtra expands the notion of *ṛddhi*. The principal fruit of concentration and trance is presented then as the attainment of the faculty of re-producing reality. Thus the Bodhisattva's course is often described as consisting in the display of these fantastic manifestations, the *vikurvaṇa*, which show, on a cognitive level, the emptiness of all things (*dharmas*), while, on a different level (which could perhaps be provisionally or heu-ristically referred to as soteriological or ethical) bring about the release of numerous living beings. One should not overlook, however, two other important levels at which the image of the wonder-worker was inter-preted by the Buddhists. There is, firstly, the fact that to many, if not most Buddhists, these supernal visions were instances of magical feats pure and simple, or at least, that they occurred as factual irruptions of the spiritual into the physical realm or as concrete manifestations of the Grace of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in their response to the petitions of living beings. Secondly, as we have seen in Lin-chi, the Bodhisattva's capacity to freely reflect the universe, his ability to allow the whole world to unimpededly flow within his own body, was seen as a figure of his complete detachment. In this last sense, the image of the wonder-worker goes beyond the purely magical, the purely visionary or metaphysical, into the realm of meditation as a path to the actualization of spiritual freedom.

These four levels can be discerned in the *Gv*, though the sūtra itself never makes such distinctions. The fact that the sūtra itself does not seem to discover any tension between these levels (contrary to, say, Lin-chi who does see a tension) is significant; for the message of the sūtra is precisely the identification of the four levels: a Bodhisattva's wonder-working (his *vimokṣa*) is the totality of his career, first as the realization of absolute emptiness, then as the actualization of his dedication to the welfare of living beings, by salvation (*dharmadāna*) and material assis-tance (*āmi-ṣadāna*); it is symbolic magic and wonder-working pure and simple; finally, it is the actualization of the Bodhisattva's complete detachment.

III

Wonder-working as a metaphor for perfect Buddhahood, and magic deception as an image for the true nature of all things is masterfully

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depicted in the imagery of the Tower of Maitreya, to which Lin-chi has alluded, and which was one of Suzuki's favorite passages from the *Gv*.

The chapter on the meeting with Maitreya begins with the arrival of Sudhana at the home of the Bodhisattva in Kutch. By a gradual process of purification the inner workings of which are left unexplained by the sūtra, Sudhana has acquired the equipment of good roots (*kuśala-mūlasaṁbhāra*), understanding of the transformation of Tathāgatas and Boshisattvas (*tathāgatabodhisattvavikurvaṇāsambodha*), the power to pervade all the levels of the *Dharmadhātu* (*dharmadhātutalabhedaspha-raṇa*), and scores of other virtues associated with the Bodhisattva's perfection in the *Gv*. He is now prepared to receive the supreme teaching from Maitreya.

Sudhana falls prostrate in awe before the abode of Maitreya, the marvelous storeyed building called *Vairocanavyūhālaṁkāragarbha-mahākūṭāgāra*. Standing before the Tower he is able to place himself before all the Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Śrava-kas of all times; he understands the absolute sameness of all *dharma*s without limit,[33]

> . . . a sameness equal to that of the space element, the unobstruct-ed sameness of the *Dharmadhātu*, . . . the sameness of the non-dis-crimination of a Tathāgata . . . the sameness which consists in the conception of all worlds being like a reflection, the sameness which consists in the fact that the arising from causes and conditions is like an echo, . . . the sameness of coming to be and ceasing to be, the sameness which consists in the fact that becoming by dependence on conditions is like non-being . . . .

Due to this very understanding he now aspires to Supreme Buddhahood and its perfections, to the powers of transformation which like an or-nament pervade and raise the *Dharmadhātu,* which are the proper sphere of the Bodhisattvas' conduct and of all knowledge.

Sudhana then arises, beholds the tower with unblinking eyes, and, while circumambulating it, describes it thus:[34]

> This is the abode of those who abide in emptiness, signlessness and desirelessness. This is the abode of those who abide in the non-dis-crimination of *dharma*s, of those who abide in the non-difference of the *Dharmadhātu*, in the non-apprehension of a *Sattvadhātu,* in the

non-arising of all *dharmas*, in homelessness in all worlds, . . . in non-support on any support, . . .

This is the abode of all and each one of the sons of the Jina who course the *Dharmadhātu* clinging to nothing . . . dedicated to the manifestation of the reach of the great gnosis . . . without impediments . . they have reached the nature of *dharmas*, essentially like the sky. Nowhere do they seek support, like a bird in the sky . . .

This radical non-attachment, however, is not to be taken to imply aloofness or indifference with regard to the suffering world. In the first place, the Bodhisattvas, inhabitants of Maitreya's tower, have not lost, but rather have enhanced, their mastery over the multifarious appearances of the world. Secondly, their compassionate works are coupled with the perception of unity or sameness already attributed to Sudhana himself:[35]

They abide in the abode of the non-differentiation of one field, which consists in the presence of all fields within one field; non-incompatibility of one *dharma* with all *dharmas*, consists in the presence of all *dharmas* in one *dharma*; they abide in the abode of non-multiplicity within one living being, which consists in the presence of all beings in one living being.

Yet, they avoid the extreme of quietude, "experts in the union of wisdom and expedients." Their mission, their ideal of holiness, therefore, does not consist in empty stillness, foreign to the world of appearance:[36]

. . . into the tip of one hair they cause to descend all fields, Buddhas, living beings and *kalpas* . . . everywhere they show the divisions of death and birth, firm in the practice of illusion, their conduct not clinging to these salvational apparitions.

It is evident, thus, that this conception of unity does not lead to aloofness. On the contrary, the perception of sameness is simply the starting point for the development of the Bodhisattva's mastery over the multifarious appearances of the world:[37]

This is the abode of those who abide in the abode where one is to attain the arising of all fields within one thought, those who abide in the abode wherein are reflected the habitations of all living beings, those

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who abide in the abode wherein there are only thoughts of welfare and happiness for all living beings, those who abide in the abode wherein one attains to complete freedom . . . . although they have given up their home in the world, they appear in the habitations of all worlds in order to bring beings to maturity; although they fix no support in all fields, they dedicate themselves to the adoration of the Tathāgatas in all fields; they traverse all Buddhafields for the sake of the attainment of the manifestations of all Buddhafields, yet never abandon their station . . . .

Through these marvelous powers they are able to preserve their purity while acting in the world:[38]

They who fall at the feet of all Tathāgatas, yet have abandoned all inclination towards the idea of a Buddha: . . . they who abide in the abode wherein are all of Mara's habitations, yet are free from the delight in the qualities of pleasure (desire); they who abide in the abode which is the entrance to all conceptions (apperceptions), yet their minds have shaken off all conceptions; they who possess bodies that conform to all the bodily forms of the world, yet no longer abide in the duality of self and living beings; they who possess bodies within all *Lokadhātus* yet no longer abide separated from the *Dharmadhātu* . . .

The essential purity of these marvelous beings is *samatā*(sameness), but in the *Gv* this term does not only mean the meeting of the Bodhisattva's mind with the absolute nature of all *dharmas* in its pristine purity and serenity. What the Tower of Maitreya teaches us is that "sameness" does not annul difference. It is the identity of the reflected image and the mirror, of the various reflections among themselves. Though all reflections gather in the mirror, they do not clash with each other, nor do they alter the pristine purity of the mirror. Though they have no reality outside the mirror, they move freely on it, without clinging to any part of its surface. The interpenetration and reciprocal reflection of all *dharmas*, represented in the metaphor of Maitreya's Tower, is the *Dharmadhātu*, the object of a Bodhisattva's gnosis, the sphere of his activities. But, more than the poetical formulation of a doctrine, the vision of the Tower of Maitreya represents the inner panorama of the Bodhisattva's effortless *samādhi*, which is one with the outer panorama of his wonder-

working activity for the sake of all living beings. Sudhana's verses of exultation conclude with a summary of these ideas. The stanzas explain how the inhabitants of the Tower, because they perceive the difference between Buddhas and non-Buddhas, are intent upon saving the world yet having perceived their essential sameness, they are able, by the wonder-working powers acquired through their mastery of sameness, to manifest the interpenetration of all *dharmas* of the *Lokadhātu* among themselves and within the *Dharmadhātu*.[39]

> Their minds free of obstructions, they review here the number of all fields, and the number of all *dharmas* in all *kalpas*, and the number of all *Jinas*. The sons of the *Jina* standing here cause to appear in one instant the arising and ceasing of all the fields that have appeared in the three times. They stand here, in their habitation of sons of the *Jina*; while coursing in non-sameness they perceive the conducts and vows of the *Jinas* and the faculties of the worldly. [But, because] in this [non-sameness] they find no obstacle, they perceive that all fields, assemblies, living beings and *kalpas*, which are as many as all the particles of dust [in the universe] are all contained in one particle of dust. They perceive likewise that the assemblies, fields, living beings, and *kalpas* are all unconfusedly reflected within all particles of dust. By means of the ways of non-arising they cause to appear those who in all fields, times and *kalpas* have awakened completely to the true nature of *dharmas*, who have become free of the true nature of becoming. Standing here and perceiving the sameness of living beings and the sameness of Buddhas in [all] *dharmas*, they enter into the sameness of the fields in the three times and the sameness of aspirations.

Evidently, the sūtra draws a distinction between the beings present in the *manifestations* which appear in the various levels or stations of the Tower and the inhabitants of the Tower. The first are all on the levels of mere reflection (*pratibhāsa*) or magical production (*māyā*). They do move within the tower; they are indeed already in the *Dharmadhātu*, yet they do not realize their presence in it. The "inhabitants" (*vihārin*) of the Tower, on the other hand, have realized the true nature of this dwelling and they manifest it to all beings.[40]

Sudhana asks to be admitted into the Tower; he is desirous of penetrating to the very core of this Tower which appears as the mirror, the foundation, upon which are reflected the appearances constituting the

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world. He is anxious to enter into the city of the Three *Dhātus,* the city of *Nirvāṇa.*[41] After an elaborate praise of Sudhana and the classical "eulogy of the *Bodhicitta*", Maitreya finally admits Sudhana into the Tower with this preamble.[42]

> But you have also asked, Son of a Family, "How is the Bodhisattva to train in the conduct of a Bodhisattva? How is he to put it into practice?" Go, Son of a Family, enter and behold within this great storeyed palace containing the ornament of the manifestations of Vairocana. There you shall know how to train in the conduct of a Bodhisattva, and how he who trains in it will obtain the perfection of good qualities . . .

Sudhana enters this Tower where he will receive the final answer to his quest. He is now able to perceive the whole *Dharmadhātu* and the position of the Bodhisattva within it:[43]

> He saw that the storeyed palace extended broadly, it extended for many hundreds of thousands of *yojana*s, having the extent of the firmament, extending in all directions like the space element . . . And within this great storeyed palace he saw hundreds of thousands of other storeyed palaces equally adorned with manifestations, adorned with innumerable jewels, parasols, banners and flags . . . He saw the storeyed palaces extending in all directions within the measureless confine of space broadly extended, each separate from the other. And on the terrace upon which he stood came, by the power of reflection, the images of all the storeyed palaces, yet all each separate from the other, each in harmony with the other, not becoming fused one with the other. And in all the other terraces there occurred the same as in this one terrace. . . . and by the power of mastery of Bodhisattva Maitreya, Sudhana recognized himself within all the storeyed palaces.

Everywhere within the storeyed palaces he sees all the stages in Bodhisattva Maitreya's career. He perceives the Bodhisattva saving the denizens of hell, feeding the hungry ghosts, preaching to the gods of the higher heavens. He sees other Bodhisattvas showing their magical powers, acquired through the Bodhisattvas' *samādhi.* "From all the hair pores in their bodies emanate clouds of magical productions of living beings . . . "

But there also appear all the *Lokadhātus*; reflected as in a mirror appear the assemblies of Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas, Śravakas, Pratyeka-buddhas, impure and purified Buddhafields, all forms of *Lokadhātus*, *Lokadhātus* where all are Buddhas, *Lokadhātus* where dominate hell dwellers, animals and pretas, one full of humans and gods, etc.[44]

Thus, Sudhana sees the different towers contained within the Tower, and he sees himself reflected everywhere. He sees the complete course of the Bodhisattva, the destinations of all beings, the saving wonder-working powers of the Bodhisattvas, and all this as mere reflections within the *kūṭāgāra*.

The philosophical import of this vision is suggested by the *Gv* 's own characterization of it. The sūtra describes the vision with a series of comparisons. It is like the visions perceived by a man who has entered into a Nāga palace, he perceives time as Nāgas do and thus in an instant he will experience clearly days and even years of his life. In the same way Sudhana perceived the whole course of time in an instant. Again it is compared to the palace of Brahmā, called the "Repository of the world's Splendid Manifestations". By the power of reflection all the worlds appear simultaneously in this palace, yet they can all be clearly distinguished.[45] The very abode of the Bodhisattva is the world seen as empty illusion, or, rather as magical trickery. But in what sense is it empty? It is empty for there seems to be no ultimate self nature; only total unity and interdependence characterize the *Dharmadhātu*.

The unity of the *Dharmadhātu*, and its connection with *samādhi* is clearly hinted at in a comparison which is also a masterful description of the psychological effect of the *kṛtsnāyatana* exercise:[46]

It is like a *bhikṣu* who abides in the contemplative attainment of total-scope: whether in bed, walking, on a couch, standing, or sitting he is one, without a second, he conceives, perceives and experiences the whole world as if it had entered the field of the [one] attainment of total-scope [he is practicing], reaching inconceivability [in proportion to] his excellence as a contemplator. In the same way, Sudhana the Merchant's Son, perceived and conceived all those manifestations as if they had entered into this realm [of Maitreya's Tower].

Reciprocal reflection and endless activity are depicted in the next comparison:[47]

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As the ornaments of all the manifestations of the cities of the Gandharvas appear in the sky and do not obstruct anything; as one would perceive at wish, when one's sphere of vision is properly purified, human palaces being pervaded by the palaces of the *Yakshas* and pervading the *Yakshas'* palaces without the ones mingling with the others; as the oceans of the reflection of the whole three-thousandfold, multi-thousandfold world system are seen upon the Universal Ocean; and as a magician through the mastery of the power of formulas and herbs shows all sorts of forms and actions, thus did Sudhana, the Merchant's Son, see the transformations of all manifestations throughout this inconceivable region which is the magic, the gnosis, and the mastery of Bodhisattva Maitreya, produced by the magic power of the gnosis of all *dharmas*, pervaded by the magic of the gnosis which is the Bodhisattvas' mastery.

At this point Maitreya himself enters into the Tower, approaches Sudhana, who evidently has been all the while deeply absorbed in *samādhi*, and snapping his fingers arouses him:[48]

Arise, Son of a Family, this is the true nature of all principles (*eṣā dharmāṇāṁ dharmatā*). Characterized by not being fabricated or set up, Son of a Family, all *dharmas* are mastered by the Bodhisattva's gnosis. In this way deprived of all self-nature, they are like magical acts, dreams or reflections.

Sudhana fails to realize the true import of what he has just seen, of its sudden disappearance and of Maitreya's words. "Where, O noble one, is this manifestation gone?" he demands. "Exactly whence it came" is the answer.[49]

It has come from the productions of a Bodhisattva's mastery and gnosis. It remains in that very mastery. It does not go anywhere, does not come from anywhere. It does not spread out, nor does it accumulate . . . it is not in every quarter, nor is it in one locality. . . . Without coming or going, a Bodhisattva's course has no moving and no standing, no resting place, no dwelling, no dying, no birth . . .

The nature of this vision, the true meaning of the Tower of Maitreya, is beyond all concepts of description, origin, order, disposition, or es-

sence. It is the very nature of all *dharma*s without origin or end. Significantly, the ineffable, unborn, true nature of all *dharma*s is depicted as a thaumaturgic feat of the Bodhisattvas. The capacity to manifest at will and, thus, act freely upon the illusory phenomena within the *Dharmadhātu*, is the culmination of the Bodhisattva's course, according to the *Gv*.

But the weight of emphasis in the whole sūtra is not upon the philosophical conception of the *Dharmadhātu*, but rather on the marvelous achievements of the Bodhisattva. The latent possibilities, in terms of philosophy (as developed, say, in the Hua-yen), or in terms of ethics (activity within illusion), are always clouded by the enthusiastic eulogies of the Bodhisattva as wonder-worker. The Indian *Avataṁsaka* readily accepts the identity of knowledge with magical power, and the *Gv* was no doubt read mostly as a panegyric of the Bodhisattva's thaumaturgic prowess. Yet, one should not overlook the fact that the dominant element in the *Gv* 's conception of *Dharmadhātu* is still emptiness, understood both as interdependence and magical delusion. Its dedicated praise of thaumaturgy notwithstanding, the *Gv* is explicit in this respect: the Bodhisattva's wonder-working reveals the *Dharmadhātu*, it is his activity within the *Dharmadhātu*. In the culminating loftiness of the *Maitreya-vimokṣa*, the *Gv* explicitly presents Maitreya's Tower as the apparitional vision of the very nature of the *Dharmadhātu*. This *dhātu*, in spite of the frequent reference to its illusory character, constitutes the foundation and form of the Bodhisattva's course (*caryā*), the source and true nature of his "good works". Through the similes of reflection and magical production the *Gv* implies that the emptiness of the apparitions does not contradict the Bodhisattva's mastery of the art of wonder-working. In this way, the *Gv* 's conception of *Dharmadhātu* clearly suggests not only a metaphysics derived from the experience of *samādhi*, but also shows the traditional Mahāyāna resolution of the conflict between the so-called "world negation" of ascetic Buddhism and the ideal of the active Bodhisattva.

One word of caution is in order with regard to the value of a metaphorical interpretation which excludes purely mythico-magical belief. In the last analysis the interpreter has little ground on which to reconstruct the putative "metaphysical doctrines" of the sūtra. On the other hand, the Buddhist believed for sure, and still believes, in the literal sense of the Bodhisattva's magical skills, and the *Gv* uses these skills as a figure of the Bodhisattva's course without rejecting at any point

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their literal existence. This is one trait which the *Gv* shares with the Tantra. Instances of the conciliation of mystic insight and metaphysical ideology with the rhetoric and practice of magic are indeed common in the history of Buddhism. Cases, such as that of Lin-chi, in which the value or factuality of magic are discarded, while retaining the imagery, cannot be discerned easily in the Indian texts, and it is more than likely that the introduction of magical imagery, apart from its ideological and poetical aptness, often responded to the adoption of magical practices pure and simple, or to sheer proselytistic convenience.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s world of magical production and apparitions could be regarded as merely a display of thaumaturgy, as most devout believers probably interpreted it; it may be construed as a figure of absolute truth, as the Hua-yen would do; or it may be taken as a symbol for the unattached conduct of the Bodhisattva, as seen in the ***Lin-chi lu.*** The sūtra evidently is amenable to all and any of these interpretations, and there is no reason why we should attempt to validate one in preference to the other.

IV

It would be a great mistake to attempt to force the *Gv* into a system or path-map. Although the text itself claims that each *kalyāṇamitra* stands one step above the preceding one,[50] there is no clue whatsoever as to why this is so. Though it is evident that true mastery of wonder-working is the exclusive sphere of higher Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, Sudhana's pilgrimage only hints here and there at differences between the various Bodhisattvas. There are, nevertheless, two systems, one external, the other contained in the sūtra, which aptly represent the ideological framework of the *Gv*'s praise of the wonder-working Bodhisattva.

The doctrine of the four (later five) gnoses (*pañca-jñānāni*) which constitute Buddhahood may serve indeed as a summary of the *Gv* 's message, though the doctrine is never formulated with reference to the *Gaṇḍavyūha.*

As explained in the *Mahāyānasūtralaṁkāra,* there are four gnoses of a Buddha, the mirror-like gnosis, the gnosis of "sameness", the gnosis of distinctions, and the gnosis of the fulfillment of the task.[51] The last three depend or find support in the first, which is unmoving (later the motionless nature of the mirror will be distinguished from the mirror as an instrument of reflection by the introduction of a previous gnosis

which consists in the pristine purity of the *Dharmadhātu*).⁵² "Maitreya's" stanzas describe the mirror-like gnosis with the following words:⁵³

The mirror-like gnosis is without possessiveness or confinement, it conforms to objects unbewildered [by them], yet never moves toward them. Because it is the cause for omniscience, it is equal to the Great Gnosis, also because in it arises the reflection of the gnosis of the Buddhahood of enjoyment (*saṁbhoga*).

Since the *Dharmadhātu* is the pure ground for the Form Bodies (*Sāṁbhogya* and *Nirmāṇa*) of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the other three gnoses of a Buddha are the fruit of these mirror-like qualities of the first gnosis. The stanzas define the first of these as follows:⁵⁴

One regards as gnosis of sameness the knowledge of the sameness of [all] living beings when by means of purity achieved through contemplative cultivation, [knowledge] enters a supportless state.

The commentary clarifies: "We regard as gnosis of sameness the knowledge of the sameness of all living beings attained by the Bodhisattva at the time of his encounter (*abhisamaya*) [with the pristine purity of the *Dharmadhātu*], when this knowledge, having been purified by contemplative cultivation rests on the supportless *Nirvāṇa* of those who have attained enlightenment." Precisely because this sameness is not static identity, it preserves the power of reflection, which generates the third gnosis:

It manifests the image of the Buddhas, present in all of the three times, conforming to the aspirations of living beings, out of compassion and benevolence. This gnosis of distinction is never obstructed by objects, it is like the treasure house of [all] *samādhi*s and *dhāraṇī*s, manifesting all powers in the circle of the assemblies, cutting through all doubt, raining down the Great Rain of Dharma.

The perfection of this power of manifestation occurs when the Buddha or Bodhisattva, like Maitreya, is capable of creating his own bodies of magical production:

The gnosis of the fulfillment of the task brings about the well being of

living beings by means of multifarious, immeasurable and unthinkable apparitional manifestations [produced] in all *dhātus*.

The question of the position of these achievements within the ascending path of the Bodhisattva is clarified by the *Gv* itself in one of its few attempts at suggesting some order in the development of the Bodhisattva's career. It is rather difficult to conciliate this passage, Sutejomaṇḍalaratiśrī's ten *janmabhūmis*, with the rest of the sūtra if we attempt to use it as a model for the development of the *Gv* 's "argument" or for Sudhana's "ascent" in the path. The ten "birth-stages", however, do give a rough idea of the relative position in the path of some of the achievements which go into the making of a wonder-working Bodhisattva.[55]

It is quite clear from the text that the instantaneous apparition of the wonder-filled *Dharmadhātu* is reserved for Bodhisattvas of the highest levels. In fact, the entrance into the *Dharmadhātu* takes place in the sixth "birth-stage", and the Bodhisattva has no ability to produce apparitional bodies until the seventh. Even then, he must wait until the ninth stage in order to acquire the complete mastery over transformational power needed to purify the fields, and he is unable to move unimpeded through all levels of the *Dharmadhātu* until the tenth and last birth-stage.

In the lower stages the Bodhisattva increases his original resolve through service to the Buddhas, (first birth-stage), and he produces the thought of enlightenment (second-stage). Beginning with the third stage, he sets out on the path and attains to accomplishments roughly reminiscent of the five gnoses. In the third stage his mind becomes equal to empty space, unimpeded, pure, yet it is able to reflect the vast panorama of worldly transformation. With an increase in the purity of his resolve, he develops compassion and enters the fourth birth-stage, hardly distinguishable from the previous one. The fifth stage marks the development of the *pāramitā*s and the end of the preparatory period.

In the sixth level the Bodhisattva is finally born into the family of the Tathāgatas, and he penetrates the true nature of the *Dharmadhātu*. It is a stage of oneness and identity with the Buddhas of the universe. But at the next level of the path the Bodhisattva goes beyond mere reunion with the essence of Buddhahood into the higher attainment of acquiring the powers of a Buddha which are his as heir to Buddhahood. For the first time he is able to produce his own apparitional bodies (*nirmāṇa*). For he has truly understood in what sense the world is like a dream, and all the teachings of the Tathāgatas like mere echoes. The eighth stage

brings mastery over the various *samādhi*s and the first step toward omniscience; the Bodhisattva becomes true True Prince of Dharma; he penetrates the *dharmatā* as it truly is, with its illusoriness and multiplicity.

In the ninth birth-stage, the Bodhisattva becomes a consummate magician; though the range of his wonder-working is still limited, he now shows transformations at will, he shares in the gnosis of Vairocana, whose magical power is not limited to the projection of apparitional bodies, as he also manifests worlds and universes. In the last stage the Bodhisattva is hardly distinguishable from a Buddha: he is now master of the sphere of all the Tathāgatas in the universe, his apparitional activity is manifested without impediment in all levels of the *Dharmadhātu*.

This schematic description of the path, however, does not exhaust the message of the *sūtra*. It still somehow lacks the magnificence and depth of the vision of the Tower of Maitreya. After all, the purported author of this description of the ten birth-stages, who, as a goddess living in Lumbinī, had been a witness to the birth of countless Buddhas, must confess:[56]

> How could I know the true course or describe the virtues of those Bodhisattvas who in every single instant of thought produce a thought which contains the conditions in all the *kalpas*, who manifest a birth which is the repository of all approaches to *dharma,* who produce the resolve of the vow to worship all the Tathāgatas, set before themselves the vow to awaken to the *dharma* of all Buddhas, generate the reflection which shows all destinies and births in all types of families and lineages, bow at the lotus feet of all Tathāgatas, know the time when all worlds will have reached maturity, manifest the transformation powers of birth and death in order to dedicate themselves to the training of all [living beings], manifest clouds of transformations in the expanse of all the fields, attain to the illumination of all the destinies, clans and families in the world.

Nothing could be more appropriate than these lines as a sample of the dominant tone of the *Gaṇḍavyūha,* its love for the miraculous and its little regard for system and clarification. These words represent something more than what is revealed by their fact-value, as the standard laudatory conclusion that must accompany every chapter. Throughout the sūtra the tone is one of exultation and marvel; beyond sheer grandilo-

quence there is certainly a meaning behind the sūtra's style. It would be a serious mistake of interpretation to ignore this dominant tone, and forget that the sūtra does want to say that the Bodhisattva's wonderworking, no matter how it is interpreted, is still unthinkable.

APPENDIX
The Ten Birth-Stages: Translation.[57]

Stage One:

(289/100a) Those beings possessed of good thoughts (*sumedhāḥ/ mkhas-pa*) who perceive the Victor by means of an immaculate higher resolve free from turpitude, [and,] remaining forever unsatisfied, aspire to [serve] all the endless clouds of arrays of the Victors (*sarvān jināna aparāntaviyūhameghān praṇidhyenti/ rgyal-ba kun-gyi phyi-ma'i mtha'i rgyan-sprin-la smon-pa*), they are in [their] first birth.

(285/94a) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this First Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Practice (*-prayogagarbham/spyod-pa'i sñiṅ-po*) of the Vow which consists in Approaching and Serving (*upasthāna/bsñen-bkur-ba*) All Buddhas? Here, Son of a Good Family, a Bodhisattva from the very beginning engages himself in rendering honor and service to Buddhas (*buddhopasthānāya prapūjyate* (read: *prayujyate*)/ *saṅs-rgyas mchod-ciṅ rim-gror bya-bala 'jug-ste*). And while honoring, respecting, regarding highly, venerating, serving, pleasing, never displeasing all the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, he never becomes satiated with the sight of the Tathāgatas, his mental disposition is nurtured by the impelling force of the Buddhas' joy at his being engaged in the service of Buddhas, the impelling force of his faith is generated by the sight of the Tathāgatas (*buddhasatkāraprayukta*(?)-*buddhaprītivegavivardhitacetās tathāgatadarśanaprasādavegasaṃjātaḥ/saṅs-rgyas-la rim-gror bya-bar brtson-pas/ saṅs-rgyas-la dga'-ba'i śugs-kyis rnam-par spel-ba'i śugs daṅ ldan-pa/ de-bźin-gśegs-pa mthoṅ-ba smos-pa'i śugs drag-po yoṅs-su skyes-pa/*). With unwavering faith (286-94b) he remains unsatiated in his gathering of merit, engaged in the collection of the equipment (*saṃbhāra*) consisting in venerating all the Tathāgatas, unencumbered in his practice (*apratiprasrabdhaprayogo/ sbyor-ba rgyun mi gcod-pa*). Son of Good Family, this First Bodhisattva Birth, called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Practice of the Vow which consists in Approaching and Serving All Buddhas, leads to the Bodhisattvas' gathering of the equipment [necessary for the attainment]

of All-knowledge, a gathering made possible by the wholesome roots (*sarvajñatāsambhāra-kuśalamūlasambhava-samārjanatāyai   saṁvartate/ thams-cad-mkhyen-pa-ñid-kyi tshogs dge-ba'i rtsa-ba yoṅs-su 'grub-pa yaṅ-dag-sdud-par 'gyur-ba'o*).

Stage Two:

(289–100a) When the thought of those who are beyond thought, pervading the whole world in all of the three times (*sarvatriyadhvagam*), as well as all fields, *dharma*s and Buddhas, displays the array of the vows to liberate [all] living beings, this is called their second birth.

(289–94b) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Second Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Arising of the Perfection of [All] the Elements of the Thought of Enlightenment? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva produces the Thought directed toward the Complete, Perfect, Unsurpassable Enlightenment: the thought of Great Compassion, seeking to rescue all living beings; the thought of pleasing all Buddhas, seeking their complete gratification; the thought of the quest for all the *dharma*s of a Buddha, seeking not to rely on anything (*sarvabuddhadharmaparyeṣṭicittaṁ sarvavastvanapekṣatāyai/ dṅos-po thams-cad-la 'phaṅs-par mi brtsi-ba'i phyir/ saṅs-rgyas-kyi chos thams-cad yoṅs-su brtsal-ba'i sems daṅ*); the thought of the Great Setting Out, seeking to move in the direction of All-knowledge; the thought of Great Benevolence (*mahāmaitrī*), seeking to pervade the whole world with the practice of the methods of attraction (*saṁgrahaprayoga/ yoṅs-su bsdu-ba'i sbyor-bas*); the thought of not abandoning the whole world, seeking to make firm the equipment (*saṁnāha*) [necessary for the attainment] of All-knowledge; the thought free of deceit and illusion, seeking to acquire the manifest clarity of the knowledge [of things] as they are; the thought of the accord between words and action, seeking to enter into the full practice of following the path of the Bodhisattva; the thought which agrees fully with [the thought of] all the Buddhas, seeking to keep all the vows of a Tathāgata; the thought of the Great Vow [to seek] All-knowledge, seeking to be unencumbered and skillful in training and bringing to maturity endless *koṭi*s of living beings. The Bodhisattva who produces the equipment of the elements of the thought of enlightenment, which, beginning with the ones mentioned above, are as many as all the particles of dust in the Buddhafields, will be born [for sure] in the Family of the Tathāgatas. This is, Son of Good Family, the Second Bodhisattva Birth called [the

Birth] into the Womb Arising of the Perfection of [All] the Elements of the Thought of Enlightenment.

Stage Three:

(289/100b) Those beings who are never satiated of drinking [the rain from] the clouds of Dharma, when their mind is engaged in the contemplation [of *dharmas*], their body unattached to the three times (*nidhyaptimānasa triyadhva-asaṅgakāyāḥ/ ṅes-par rtogs-pa'i yid-kyis dus gsum chags med lus*), their minds and bodies equal to the immaculate sphere of empty space (*mkha'-dbyiṅs dri-med mñam med rnams-kyi lus ldan-pa* (sic): *ākāśadhātuvimalā* (sic) *samacittakāyāḥ*), to them belongs the incomparable third birth.

(286–95a) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Third Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Arising of the Inclination Leading to the Practice of the Right Contemplation of the Approaches to Dharma? (*dharmanayanidhyaptiprayoganetryabhimukhasambhavagarbhaṁ/ chos-kyi tshul-la ṅes-par gźag-pa'i sbyor-ba'i tshul mñon-tu gyur-ba 'byuṅ-ba'i sñiṅ*). Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva's mental disposition becomes inclined towards the right contemplation which produces the oceans of approaches to all *dharmas* (*sarvadharmanayasambhavanidhyaptimukhacetāḥ/ chos thams-cad-kyi tshul rgya-mtsho yod do* (?) *chog ṅes-par rtogs bsam*), tends and inclines toward the fulfillment of [all] the aspects of the path to All-knowledge, intends to practice a conduct beyond reproach, is inclined toward the purification of the oceans of approaches to all the *samādhis* of the Bodhisattva, a mind disposed toward the perfection of the full practice of all the virtues of a Bodhisattva, towards the manifestation of the full array of all the elements in the path of the Bodhisattva, a disposition equally energetic and unencumbered in a cosmic age of burning fire as in a cosmic age in which have arisen a vast number of opportunities for All-knowledge (*vipulasarvajñatārambaṇasambhavakalpoddāhajvalanakalpāpratiprasrabdhāvīryacetāḥ/ thams-cad-mkyen-pa-ñid-du dmigs-pa'i tshogs rgya-mtsho chen-po yoṅs-su bsgrub-pa bskal-pa'i me 'bar-bas kyaṅ/ rgyun mi-gcod-par bya-ba'i sems daṅ ldan-pa*), a disposition toward the manifestation of the Bodhisattva's course, which is without end nor middle and is the setting out in the training and bringing to maturity of the whole world, their mental disposition has entered the approaches to experiencing all the approaches (?) to the coming to be and ceasing to be [of *dharmas*], [an experiencing which takes place] in all the

modes of conduct and training which consitute the perfection of the vir-
tues of the Bodhisattvas established in full practice (*sarvākāraśikṣāsu
pratipannabodhisattvaguṇapariniṣpattiṣu sarvabhāvavibhāvanayānubhāv-
anayapraviṣṭacetās/ yoṅs-su spyod-pa'i tshul thams-cad-la rab-tu żugs-
pa ni byaṅ-chub-sems-dpa'i yon-tan yoṅs-su rdzogs-par bya-la dṅos-po
thams-cad rnam-par bsgom-pas dṅos-po med-pa'i tshul-la żugs-pa'i sems
daṅ ldan-pa yin-te,* suggesting: *sarvabhāvavibhāvanābhāvanaya-*). This is,
Son of Good Family, the Third Bodhisattva Birth called . . . (same as
above).

Stage Four:

(289/100b) Those beings who enter into the ocean of Great Compas-
sion, while entering the ocean of the approaches to All-knowledge
with a higher resolve as firm as diamond cored Mount Sumeru
(*adhyāśayair vajrasārasumerukalpaiḥ/ sarvajñatānayasamudra viśā-
hamānāḥ/ lhag-pa'i bsam-pa ri-rab rdo-rje mtshuṅs brtan-pas// thams-
cad-mkhyen-tshul rgya-mtshor rnam-par 'jug byed ciṅ//*), to them,
Bulls among Men, belongs the fourth birth.

(286/85b) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Fourth Bo-
dhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Purification of the
Higher Resolve in [all] Worlds in the Three Times? Here, Son of
Good Family, a Bodhisattva becomes perfectly pure in his element of
higher resolve. He become possessed of clarity with respect to the en-
lightenment of a Buddha. He enters the oceans of a Bodhisattva's ap-
proaches. He becomes firm, his mental disposition firmly in possession
of a higher resolve which is as firm as the diamond element (*dṛḍhā-
dhyāśayavajradhātusaṁgṛhītacetāḥ/ bsam-pa brtan-pa rdo-rje'i khams
lta-bus yoṅs-su zin-pa'i sems daṅ ldan-pas*). He turns away from rebirth
in any of the destinies of becoming. He turns towards the perfection of
the magical transformations brought about by all the Tathāgatas. He
becomes possessed of a way to excellence, leading to an increase in the
acute faculties of a Bodhisattva (*viśeṣagāminīprāpto bhavati bodhi-
sattvatīkṣṇendriyatāvardhanatāyai / byaṅ-chub-sems-dpa'i dbaṅ-po
rnam-par spel-pa-la khyad-par-du 'bogs-pa rab-tu thob-pa yin*). He ac-
quires a mind for goodness (*kalyāṇacitto bhavati/sems śin-tu dge-ba yin*),
in order to make manifest the splendour of his higher resolve. He be-
comes unshakable, so as to nurture the steadfast Great Vows. They
direct their thoughts (?) to all the Tathāgatas, in order to pulverize all the
mountains of obstructions (*sarvatathāgatasamanvāhṛto bhavati sarvāva-*

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raṇaparvatavikiraṇatāyai | sgrib-pa thams-cad-kyi ri rnam-par gtor-ba'i phyir de-bźin-gśegs-pa thams-cad-gyis (?) *yaṅ-dag-par dgoṅs-pa yin*). They become a true refuge, the source of livelihood for the whole world. This is, . . . (the same as above).

Stage Five:

(289/100b) Those who, having pervaded the ten directions with benevolence (*maitrayā | byams-pas*), bring to fulfillment (*abhinirharanti | mṅon-bsgrubs-te*) oceans of immaculate perfections, and bring to maturity the [whole] world by means of the light [rays] of Dharma (*dharmaprabhābhiranta | chos-kyi 'od 'gyed: bhajantaḥ* (?)), to them, Great Men, belongs the fifth birth.

(287/96a) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Fifth Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of Universal Splendor? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva perfects his practice (*prayogasaṃpanno bhavati*), he practices fully the maturation and training of the whole world. He removes himself from all apperception of things (*sarvavastusaṃjñoccalito bhavati*), truly renouncing whatever he has given up (*pramuktatyāga: sbyin-pa lhug-par gtoṅ-bas*) (perfection of giving). He becomes perfectly pure, possessed of endless good habits, making his abode in the sphere of the Tathāgatas (*tathāgataviṣayasaṃvasana* | Tibetan has this phrase with *vīrya* below, where it is equally out of place: *de-bźin-gśegs-pa'i yul-la gnas-pa*) (perfection of morality). He perfects acceptance, possessed of the splendor of the acceptance of all the *dharma*s of a Buddha (perfection of patience). He becomes possessed of great zeal and energy, and has set out toward All-knowledge through a wide, shelterless [road] (?) (*sarvata udāraniḥśaraṇapratipannaḥ| thams-cad-mkhyen-pa-ñid-du yaṅ-spar 'byuṅ-ba-la źugs-pas*) (perfection of energy). He has been released by contemplation, purified in the circle of the gnosis of the *samādhi* which faces every direction (*samantamukhasamādhi*) (perfection of contemplation). He is possessed of the light of the energy of discernment (*prajñāvīryaprabho*), he has acquired the splendor which illuminates all *dharma*s (perfection of wisdom). He has the eye of unimpeded vision (*asaṅgacakṣur*), he has entered the recognition of the oceans of the vision of the Buddhas. He becomes capable of manifesting the reality of all *dharma*s, bringing full satisfaction to the whole world. He becomes well engaged in the acquisition of the proper approaches to Dharma. This . . . (same as above).

Stage Six:

(289/100b)

Those who enter the ocean of approaches to the *Dharmadhātu*, having penetrated (*pratividdha / rab-tu rtogs-pas*) into the nature (*svabhāva*) of *dharma*s, their minds unattached (*asaṅga*), now reborn into the family of the Buddhas, incomparable in the three times, to these wise ones belongs this great sixth birth.

(287/96a) Among these, Son of a Family, what is this Sixth Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Arising of the Lineage of the Family of All the Tathāgatas? (*sarvatathāgatakulagotrasaṁbhava-garbhaṁ/ de-bźin-gśegs-pa'i rigs-kyi rgyud-du byuṅ-ba'i sñiṅ-po*). Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva is born into the family of the Tathāgatas, he is reborn into the lineage (*vaṁśa*) of the Tathāgatas. He has reached the entrance into the approach to all the *dharma*s of a Buddha, he has been purified in the Great Vows of the Tathāgatas of the past, the present and the future. His wholesome roots become common property with the wholesome roots of all the Tathāgatas. He becomes of one body with all Buddhas. By means of his clear *dharma*s he goes into the supramundane path. He abides with *dharma*s of Great Nobility (*mahātmadharmavihārī*) in the *samādhi* of the vision of the Buddhas' masteries (*adhiṣṭhāna*). At all times he practices the *dharma* of purifying living beings. His eloquence knows no encumbrance when asked about the Buddha Dharma. This is . . . (same).

Stage Seven:

(289–290/100b) Those who, possessed of a mind free of attachement, have purified the Body of Dharma, completely pervading the fields with their own bodies (*svakaiḥ śarīraiḥ*), having entered and followed through all the powers of a Buddha, to these awakened beings belongs the unthinkable seventh birth.

(287/96b) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Seventh Bodhisattva Birth Called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Ornament of the Light Manifestation of the Powers of the Tathāgatas? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva does not cease to manifest the entrance into the powers of a Buddha to those who are in the Buddhafields. He does not turn back from his dedication to the ocean of the various virtues of a Bodhisattva. He is not afraid of the knowledge of all *dharma*s as they really are: pure magical apparitions. He understands

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that the whole world is like a dream. He brings to realization (*abhinir-harati/mṅon-par bsgrub-po*) the fact that whatever is based on the ideation (*vijñapti*) of form is like a mere reflection. He masters the transformations brought about by the higher gnoses, which are like magical creations (*nirmitopamābhijñāvikurvitavaśitāprāpto/mṅon-par śes-pas rnam-par 'phrul-ba sprul-ba lta-bu-la dbaṅ rab-tu thob-par byed-do*). He shows the entrances into rebirth in the various destinies of becoming, which are like shadows. He discerns that the turning of the wheel of Dharma by all Tathāgatas is like unto an echo. He acquires the ultimate perfection in explaining the approaches to the *Dharmadhātu*, dedicated to the exposition of the various means and approaches to the goal (*nānārthopāyanaya- / thabs-kyi tshul don sna-tshogs*). This is ... (as above).

Stage Eight:

(290/100b) Those who are masters and experts in the approach to oceans of gnoses, who now examine (*vyavacārayanti / rnam-par dpyod*) the door to All-knowledge, who have entered all the oceans of approaches to *samādhi*, to these beings grounded in reality is considered to belong the eighth birth.

(287/97a) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Eighth Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Production of the Consummation of the Examination of the Door to All-knowledge? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva becomes a True Prince [of Dharma] and is to be properly called [for the first time] a "Bodhisattva" (*kumārabhūta eva bodhisattvavyavasthanavyavasthito / gźo-nur gyur-ciṅ byaṅ-chub-sems-dpa'i rnam-par dgod-pa-la rnam-par gnas-pa yin-te*: is still a suckling, since he was only recently born into the family of the Tathāgatas??). Taking his stand on this [new condition of perfect Bodhisattvahood] he examines (*rnam-par dpyod*, for *vyavacarayati* (?)) the approach to the gnosis of an All-knower. When he shows the measureless range [of knowledge] of the Bodhisattva, countless *kalpa*s go to their destruction in each approach and door to gnosis. He is a master of all the *samādhi*s of a Bodhisattva, having become a consummated expert. In one instant of thought he comes to stand (*upapadyate/skyes-te*) at the feet of the Tathāgatas in the unutterable number of Buddha Fields in the ten directions in all instants of thought. He attains to an undivided gnosis (*asambhinna / tha mi dad-pa*) with respect to ob-

mastery of undivided (*asaṁbhinna*) gnosis with respect to *dharmas* which do not intermingle (*asaṁbhinna*). And, in the *Dhātu* which is free of objective stations (*anārambaṇa*) he descends into objective stations without end. Even in the most limited (*parītta / chuṅ-ba*) stations he enters the stage (*bhūmi*) of endless instruction. And he penetrates the *Dharmatā* which is at the same time circumscribed (*parītta*) and vastly pervasive (*mahadgata*). He understands that the whole world is equal to ideation (*vijñaptisama / rnam-par dmigs-pa daṅ mnyam-pa*).[59] By means of contemplative development (*bhāvanayā*) he conforms (*anugacchati / khoṅ-du chud-par byed*) to the stations of all *dharmas*, [understanding (*anugacchati*)] that they are the paths of ideation (*vijñapti / rnam-par śes*). This is . . . (as above).

Stage Nine:

(290/100b) Those who purify the [whole] expanse of Buddhafields, who are fully engaged in the approaches to the maturation of living beings, who display the full array of magical transformations of a Buddha, to them, possessed of the Greater Resolve, belongs the ninth birth.

(288/97b) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Ninth Bodhisattva Birth called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Array of Magical Apparitions in the *Dharmadhātu*? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva in an instant of thought produces everywhere by his own mastery (*adhitiṣṭhati*) multifarious arrays of Buddhafields. He has attained ultimate perfection in his confident ability (*vaiśāradya*) in the magical production of living beings (*sattvanirmāṇa*). He has attained to skill in the magical production of Buddhas (*buddhanirmāṇa*). He has purified his confident ability in the magical production of *dharmas* (*dharmanirmāṇa*). He is now in possession of the unimpeded, sublime range [of action and knowledge] which is the *Dharmadhātu* (*asaṅga-varadharmadhātugocara / chos-kyi dbyiṅs dam-pa chags-pa med-pa'i spyod-yul daṅ ldan-pa*). He is skillful in the mastery over the magical transformation of all bodies in accordance with the disposition and resolve [of living beings] (*yathāśayasarvakāyavijñapty-*(read: *vikṛty-*)-*adhiṣṭhānakuśala / bsam-pa ji-lta-ba bźin-du sems-can-gyi* (misreading "*sarva*"?) *lus rnam-par bya-ba'i byin-gyi rlabs-la mkhas-pa*). He has acquired skill in the inconceivable training of [all] living beings. He manifests the various courses [of the Bodhisattva path] together with full enlightenment. And he becomes skillful in the realization of the

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path to All-knowledge free from the [two kinds of] obstruction (*āvara-ṇa*). Upon [the development of] this [skill], he displays the skill of turning the wheel of Dharma, and acquires the skill of bringing to fulfillment the means for the training of living beings without middle or end. In the course of time, he reaches the very heart of the Gnosis of Vairocana (*vairocanajñānagarbhakośa*), his mind always collected in the training of living beings. This is . . . .

Stage Ten:

(290/100b) Those who have entered into the very powers of the Victors, [now] being nurtured by the all pervading impelling force of All-knowledge, who are unattached and unimpeded (*asaṅga*) in [all] the approaches to [all] the levels of the *Dharmadhātu* (*dharmadhātuta-labhedanayeṣu / chos-dbyiṅs gźi / tshul tha dad chags med-pa*), to them, True Sons of the Victors, belongs the tenth birth.

(288/98a) Among these, Son of Good Family, what is this Tenth Bodhi-sattva Birth, called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Impelling Force (*vega / śugs-drag-po*) produced by the Attainment of the State of a Tathā-gata (*tathāgatabhūmi*)? Here, Son of Good Family, the Bodhisattva becomes confirmed (*abhiṣikto* (Suzuki), *vivikto* (Vaidya), perhaps: *avi-vikto/* Tib. no equivalent), his sphere [of knowledge] (*viṣaya*) becoming one with that of the Tathāgatas in the three times. He enters a sphere corresponding to all the *Lokadhātu*s. He knows directly the arising of thoughts of all living beings, from that of their very first birth to that of their very last death. He discerns a sphere corresponding to the conduct and gnosis of all Bodhisattvas. He discerns directly the full enlighten-ment of all Buddhas in the past, the present and the future. He discerns directly the skill of rendering service to all *dharma*s. He discerns directly all *kalpa*s, whether a creation *kalpa* or a destruction *kalpa*, whether in past beginnings, in the present, or in the limits of the future, he discerns the name of each and the doctrines preached in each. He brings to ful-fillment the gnosis of the mastery in displaying before all living beings, to each according to his maturity and in due time, the sphere of the manifestation and illumination (?) (*vyūhavibuddhyanaviṣaya / gdul-bar bya-ba* (?)) of full enlightenment. He displays directly, upon the birth of all Buddhas, their skill and methods in turning the wheel of Dharma which leads to full enlightenment, because he is skillful in the full appli-cation (*abhinirhāra*) of the means to train an endless number of spheres of living beings (*sattvadhātu*). This is, Son of Good Family, the Tenth

Bodhisattva Birth of the Bodhisattvas, called [the Birth] into the Womb of the Impelling Force produced by the Attainment of the Stage of a Tathāgata.

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NOTES

[1] Edward Conze, **Buddhism: Its Essence and Development** (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), pp. 81–85, 103–105, 174–176.

[2] Ibid., pp. 174–176. The importance of these beliefs for the history of the origins of Tantra has been highlighted by Conze. No doubt a greater understanding of the role of magical belief and imagery in Buddhist doctrine has contributed significantly to our understanding of Tantra (maligned by early researchers in the field).

[3] *DN* I. 210–223. Cf. *DN* III. 3–4; *SN* IV. 290; *AN* I. 170, V. 327; *Vism* XII. 19–24.

[4] *Vin Mahāvagga* I. It is all-important to remember that the display of these marvels, though obviously concentrated in the latter strata of the Canon, is not absent from the Nikāyas, e.g. *SN* V. 282 ff.

[5] Cf., e.g., *AN* III. 340, 425, and the four *iddhipāda* (earlier usage) in *AN* I. 39, 297, II. 256 III. 82; *DN* II. 213, *MN* I. 130, *Ps* I. 111. The ariyan *iddhi*: *DN* III. 112; *AN* I. 93. Vinaya regulations: *Vin* II. 111–112, 183, 193, 240, III. 67, 91, 101, also I. 31.

[6] *Lin* 57, cp. 27 Cp. the *Abhijñā-parivarta* of the *Avataṁsaka,* T.T. 761 (34), T. 279, 229c–237b.

[7] *Lin* 55, cp. 58.

[8] *Lin* 42, cp. 29–33, 39–40, 57, 66, 73, 75, 85, 90, 94, all of which are reminiscent of, when not containing direct allusions to, the *Avataṁsaka.*

[9] *Su* 101a–103b.

[10] *Lin* 40, cp. 87. In note 166 of the recently printed translation of R. F. Sasaki (**The Record of Lin-chi,** Kyoto: Institute for Zen Studies, 1975), it is suggested that statements such as those in passage 40 contradict Lin-chi's use of the *Avataṁsaka* ideal as a paradigm for higher Bodhisattvahood. There is certainly no contradiction. The Ch'an master simply is insisting on the necessity of understanding the teachings of the *Avataṁsaka* figuratively as a symbol of the non-dual, of complete detachment, and not literally as the description of a transcendent realm.

[11] "The Tower of Maitreya": *Gv* 368 ff.; "Vairocana Dharmadhātu": 308, passim; "Lotus Womb World": (*Kusumatalagarbhavyūhālaṁkāralokadhātu*) 307 and passim.; "Mother of All Buddhas", the special attainment of Māyādevī is to be the Mother of all the Tathāgatas, beginning with Vairocana himself, *Gv* 346 ff. cf *Aṣṭa* 253 ff. Another Ch'an passage reminiscent of the *Avataṁsaka* (chosen at random): Ch'ang-sha's sermon in **Ching-tê ch'uan-têng-lu,** Chap. X, T. 2076 (LI): 274a: 12–16. Another Ch'an view of magical apparitions: *Pi-yen-lu,* Case XI, commentary on the "gāthā" (P'ing-ch'ang).

[12] *Sr* (D) 314, 411. The passages where these lines are found (Chap. XXIV. st. 1–15, and XXXII. st. 5–53, respectively) represent one of the clearest classical expositions of the dogmatic transition from *nairātmya* to *śūnyatā,* from *śūnyatā* to the identity of form and emptiness, and thence to *samatā* and the simile of the wonderworker.

[13] *Gv* 19, and *Sr*(D) 410, respectively. The magical transformations of Buddhas are also like empty space, because they have no ground or footing (*Gv* 19: st. 27, also 26); in this sense, magical transformation, *dharmas,* and *nirvāṇa* are identical (*Sr* (D) loc. cit.).

[14] *Sr*(D) 412, 411.

[15] *Sr* (D) 410–411. The change in grammatical number in the last line is in the original.

[16] *Sr* (D) 412. cf. 410. On the image of the magician the literature is vast. A few examples: Conze, op. cit., p. 175; *Rgs* X. 19; *Aṣṭadaśa* 251a–251b (cf. 307b–308a); *Aṣṭa* 38–41, 441–443 (cf. 513–514); *Rgs* XX. 2, 10–12; *Questions of Nāgaśrī*, T. 234 (VIII): 745c–746a; *Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśasūtra* (ed. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. IV, Calcutta, 1959), pp. 182–183; *Śgs* 632c–633a (148–149); *Ratnakūṭa*, T. 310 (XI): 590a–591c, Section 9 of Chapter 36, titled *Shen-t'ung cheng-shuo p'in* (the classical example of the use of magical powers to illustrate emptiness and nonclinging; important text in the history of Zen), 486b–492b, Chapter 21, the *Bhadramāyākāravyākaraṇa* (ed. and trans. of Tib. text by Konstanty Régamey, Warzawa: Warsaw Society of Sciences and Letters (Publications of the Oriental Commission, No. 3), 1938) (cf. the story of Sirigutta and Garahadinna in *Dhpd Com* I. 2, pp. 435–445); *SP* (KN) 318 (also st. in Chap. XV). In the śāstras, cf. Kamalaśīla's use of *Dharmasaṅgīti* (T. T. Vol. 36, 47a) in *BhKI* 219, *BhKII* 54a, and *BhKIII* 29, also *BhKI* 221 and *BhKII* 53b; *Pras* 46–50 (especially Subhūti's conversation with the two "phantom" monks, quoted from the *Ratnakūṭa*, p. 49), 330–339 (*MK* XVII. 31–33), 443–446, 463; *BcāP* 90–91, 382–383, 411–412, 582–548; *Māvṛ* 247. In the *Gv.*, passim, but see, e.g., 19 (st. 35) See also note 6, above.

[17] *Pras* 540. On *ākāśa*, cf., *Rgs* I. 19, X. 9, XVI passim, XVIII 6–8, XX 5–7, XXVIII 2; *Aṣṭa* 192–193, 196–198, 201, 205–206, 279, also 21, 24; *RGV* I. 49–50, IV. 73–74, 96; *Māvṛ* 245; on the Dharmadhātu as *ākāśa*, cf. *BuBhū* 39a–40b (*BuBhūvyā* 300b–311a); *ākāśa* as a mere denomination for the absolute, *Siddhi* 75–77. In the *Gv.*, passim, but see, e.g., 240–242.

[18] *Gv.* 288. See *Appendix* for a full translation of the relevant passages. The *Dharmadhātu* is, in fact, all *dharmas*, as they are when approached as the field for the application of the gnosis of detachment (cf. *Gv* 20, st. 48; *Dśbhī* 145).

[19] *Gv.* 308, also, cp. 373–4.

[20] Ibid.; the last phrase, "*dharmadhātuparama*", may also mean in other contexts "having the *Dharmadhātu* as their goal or end result". Similar expressions are used, however, to describe the *Kusumatalagarbhavyūhālaṃkāra Lokadhātusamudra* in *Gv* 307, and all Lokadhātus in 308.

[21] *Gv.* 290. See *Appendix*.

[22] *Gv.* 234. Cf. also, 7, 18, 20, 384, 387. On the *Dharmadhātu*, cf. also, *Laṅk* 290, *Śgs* 144–145, 175; *Māvṛ* 51, *RGV* I. 154–155 and commentary (also, p. 10).

[23] *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Prabhāvapaṭala. Comparing *MN* I. 34 to *MN* I. 103–104, there would seem to be a difference between *iddhi* as achievement in concentration (*iddhipāda*) and *iddhi* as magical power (*iddhividha*); the distinction, however, is not maintained. For the Abhidharma, cf., *Vism* XII. 20 ff., *AKośa* VII. 48a. Some Mahāyāna references for the power of *ṛddhi*: *Aṣṭa* 508; *Pañca* (D) 54, 207 (definition of *ṛddhipāda*, similar to *AN* III. 82 and the like, cf. note 5, above), 83–84 (*ṛddhi* and worldly illusion); *Rgs* XX. 10–12 (*prajñopāya* as *ṛddhi*); *Vkn* 250–258; *Śgs* 32, 34. On *vikurvaṇa*, cf., *Śgs* 135. On *abhijñā*, *DN* I. 89 ff., *AN* II. 246–247, et al.; *Vism* XII–XIII, *AKośa* VII. 42–56 (containing a comment on the fact that the purely thaumaturgic *abhijñās* are also the dominion of the unenlightened); *BcāP* 428 (quot-

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ing a Prajñāpāramitā passage I have not been able to identify: *nāsti bhāvasaṁjñinaḥ ṣaḍabhijñābhāvanā.*). Related questions: *manomayakāya Vin* II. 185, *AN* I. 24, III. 122, *SN* IV. 71, et al.; *Vism* XII. 135, 139, VII. 30; *Laṅk* 80–81, 136–137; *māyopamā-samādhikāya,* cf., Maryla Falk, *Nāma-rūpa and Dharma-rūpa* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1943), pp. 180–181.

[24] These are stock phrases, more or less expanded in a legion of texts. For references, cf. *Vkn* 132–133 (and notes), 263–265, and *Traité* 357–387. Specifically, on *māyā,* cf., *Aṣṭa* 16–17, 39–40, 438–441; *Rgs* I. 14, 19, XIX. 4; *Pañca* (D) 37; *Laṅk* 90–96; *Pras* 330–331; on *marīci, Ratnāvalī* I. 55–57; on *svapna, Aṣṭa* 38–40, 512–516; *Pañca* (D) 153–154. Also, *Gv.* passim, see, e.g., 417.

[25] *Gv* 195, cp. 337–338 (st. 116–120, quoted below).

[26] *Gv* 403.

[27] *Gv* 231–232 (st. 16 ff.); cp., Vāsantī Chapter, pp. 181–182 (st. 22 ff.) and the passage from the Gopā Chapter quoted below.

[28] *Gv* 195.

[29] *Gv* 337–338.

[30] *Gv* 288, 290, and *Siddhi* (on *Ta-chih-tu-lun*) 779–783.

[31] *Gv* 18 (st. 20).

[32] *Gv* 181.

[33] *Gv* 369. On *samatā,* cf., *SP* (KN) 49, 128, 131–132, 142–143; *Śgs* 28–29, 129–131, 184–188, 217; *Vkn* 108, 143–144, 153, 156–157, 235, 239, passim.

[34] *Gv* 370.

[35] Ibid.

[36] *Gv* 374–375 (st. 23, 28, cp. st. 25–27); cp. *Gv* 25–35, etc.

[37] *Gv* 370, cp. 375 ff.

[38] Ibid. These descriptions of the conduct and state of the higher Bodhisattvas is certainly reminiscent of the *apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa* concept; cp., e.g., *Siddhi* 671–2, 677; *BhKI* 197–198, (also 188), *BhKII* 42b.

[39] *Gv* 376–377 (st. 45ff.)

[40] Cf. the description of the *vihārin* in 369 ff. with that of the worlds contained within the Tower in 410 ff., and Sudhana's own reflections (414 f.).

[41] *Gv* 395.

[42] *Gv* 407.

[43] *Gv* 407–408.

[44] *Gv* 410–411.

[45] *Gv* 415, lines 9–15.

[46] Ibid., lines 15–19.

[47] Ibid., lines 19–25.

[48] Ibid., lines 26 ff.

[49] *Gv* 416.

[50] At the end of each section the *kalyāṇamitra* in question confesses his limitations and incapacity to answer Sudhana's question (*mayā . . . anuttarāyāṁ samyaksaṁ-bodhau cittam utpāditam/na ca jānāmi kathaṁ bodhisattvena bodhisattva-caryāyāṁ śikṣitavyam kathaṁ pratipattavyam* p. 81, stereotyped phrase repeated throughout the sūtra with minor variants.). Though the *kalyāṇamitra* may sometimes explain the reasons for or expound on his/her ignorance, there is no hint as to the reason why

one *vimokṣa* is superior to another, or, for that matter, whether one *vimokṣa* is or is not superior to another.

⁵¹ *Mahāyānasūtrālaṁkāra* IX. 67–75. Cf., also, *Mahāvyutpatti* 109–114; *Siddhi* 681–69.

⁵² *BuBhūvyā* 298a–332a.

⁵³ St. 68–69. Cf. the reflection (*pratibhāsa*) of the Towers, *Gv.* 408 ff.

⁵⁴ St. 70. See note 33 above on *samatā.* Also *Gv* 376–377. The characteristics of the following two *jñānas* (st. 71–73) also correspond to the description of the Tower as embodiment of the Bodhisattva's *jñāna.*

⁵⁵ See *Appendix.* The *Dśbhū* is not as careful in fixing a position to wonder-working in its ten levels of the path.

⁵⁶ *Gv* 299.

⁵⁷ Figures in parentheses refer to page in *Gv.* and folio in T.T. (Vol. 26). In the original the verses follow the prose section; here, we have placed each stanza before the corresponding prose description of the *bhūmi* to facilitate comparison. It is difficult to understand what type of system, if any, underlies the description of the ten Birth-Stages. No certain correspondences can be established, except for the very obvious *adhimukti* (1), *cittotpāda* (2), *tathāgatakulajanma* (6), *kumārabhūta* (8), *buddhakārya* (9), *sarvajñajñāna* (10). A different system of *janmabhūmis* is outlined without any explanation in *Gv.* 416–417.

⁵⁸ *sam-bhid-*: "to divide, split," as in *sambhinnavṛtta*; but, also, "to contract, to gather," as in *sambhinnasarvāṅga*, and, "to mix, to fuse," as in *sambheda.* The *Gv* is constantly playing on the ambiguity of this word, but the Chinese and Tibetan translators take it only in its first meaning.

⁵⁹ Cp. T. 279, 288-c-5-6 and note 27, above.

The *gotra, ekayāna* and *tathāgatagarbha* theories of the Prajñāpāramitā according to Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta

D. Seyfort Ruegg

In the course of his monumental work on the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras E. Conze has written: 'It is quite a problem how the Dharma-element which is common to all can be regarded as the source of a variety of "lineages" [*gotra*]'.[1] It has been the endeavour of the present writer in a series of publications starting in 1968 to shed light on this very fundamental and interesting question. An article in the *Festschrift* dedicated to the late E. Frauwallner was devoted to the interconnexion between the single, unique and undifferentiated *dharmadhātu*, the naturally existent spiritual element or germ (*prakṛtistham gotram*) and the variously conditioned psycho-spiritual categories (*gotra*)[2] reoognized by the Buddhist texts as explained by Ārya Vimuktisena (ca. 500 ?) and his successor Bhadanta Vimuktisena in their commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (i. 37–39), which they correlate with the topics of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.[3] And shortly afterwards there followed a more detailed study of this question as it relates to the notion of the *tathāgatagarbha* or *buddha*-nature in *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra: Études sur la sotériologie et la gnoséologie du bouddhisme* (Paris, 1969) and *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston Rin chen grub* (Paris, 1973). In the last publications Haribhadra's commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitā were discussed, and the importance of the doctrine of the One Vehicle (*ekayāna*), was taken up at some length not only from the point of view of soteriology but also from that of gnoseology.

Between the two Vimuktisenas and Haribhadra (fl. c. 750–800) on the one side and the Tibetan exegetes on the other there lived a number of important Indian commentators whose work could be only briefly touched on in the *Théorie*. Amongst the most important of these later Indian masters of the Prajñāpāramitā are Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta, both of whom have been reckoned by Buddhist doxographers as being, for certain systematic reasons, close to the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika school, and Ratnākaraśānti (first half of the 11th century),

a Vijñānavādin (of the Alīkākāravāda branch) who appears to have undertaken a harmonization of the Vijñānavāda and the Madhyamaka in the manner of the synthesizing movements especially characteristic of later Buddhist thought in India.

One of Ratnākaraśānti's main works on the Prajñāpāramitā—the *Sārottamā* (or *Sāratamā* ?), a Pañjikā on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, which until recently was known only by its Tibetan version in the Bstan 'gyur—has now now been recovered in an incomplete Sanskrit manuscript. Since the promised publication of this text is awaited with keenest interest by students of this literature, his work must be left for another occasion.[4] The present paper will therefore consider the discussions by Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta of the relation between the *gotra*, the *dharmadhātu*, the *ekayāna*, and the *tathāgatagarbha*.

Little reliable information is now available on the life of Dharmamitra. In the colophon of the Tibetan translation of his *Prasphuṭapadā* he is referred to as an Ācārya of the Madhyamaka born in Baṅ·la (Baṅgala ?). Tāranātha, who makes him a contemporary of Dharmottara (fl. ca. 800), Vimalamitra and Dharmākara, places him in the reign of the Pāla king Dharmapāla (rg. ca. 770–810), who was a patron of Haribhadra.[5] Dharmamitra's only extant work, included in the Bstan 'gyur, is the *Prasphuṭapadā*, the full title of which is *Abhisamayālaṃkārakārikāprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstraṭīkā*; it takes the form of a commentary on Haribhadra's shorter commentary ('*grel chuṅ*), the *Śāstravṛtti* known as '*Grel pa don gsal* (*Sphuṭārthā) which is also available now only in a Tibetan translation.[6]

More is known about Abhayākaragupta, who was a scholar of the Vikramaśīla seminary and a prolific polymath. He flourished at the time of King Rāmapāla (rg. ca. 1077–1130), in the thirtieth year of whose reign he composed his *Munimatālaṃkāra*.[7] He is thus one of the last of the great Indian Buddhist masters whose works we possess; and his principal independent philosophical work, the *Munimatālaṃkāra*, is an extensive treatise of somewhat encyclopaedic character in which he expounds Mahāyāna thought with special reference to the Prajñāpāramitā doctrine and with copious references to the basic sources of the Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda. The commentary on the *Aṣṭa* entitled *Marmakaumudī* is the second of Abhayākara's works to be considered here. In addition, he wrote a number of important works on ritual and iconology (the *Vajrāvalī* and *Niṣpannayogāvalī*), several Tantrik cycles and astronomical calculation (*gaṇana*, in his *Kālacakrāvatāra*).

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Dharmamitra's *Prasphuṭapadā* is of interest to the student of the Prajñāpāramitā literature from many points of view. For our present purpose suffice it to say that Dharmamitra attributes to the Yogācārins (Vijñānavādins) the theory that there exists a category of persons whose *gotra* is cut off (fol. 56a). This tenet is considered a major point of difference between them, especially as their doctrines came to be codified by many of the Tibetan doxographers,[8] and the Mādhyamikas who on the contrary maintain the theory of the One Vehicle (*ekayāna*) and hold that all sentient beings are certain to attain supreme Awakening or buddhahood, an attainment that necessarily presupposes that the naturally existent (*prakṛtistha*) *gotra* can never be totally cut off.[9] In accordance with this Mādhyamika view Dharmamitra explains the scriptural allusions to a cut-off *gotra* or *agotra* as referring simply to the great difficulty some experience in attaining liberation.[10]

In this regard Dharmamitra quotes both the *(Samādhirāja-)Candrapradīpasūtra* and the *Adhyardhaśatikā*, a Sūtra that explicitly mentions, evidently for the first time in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, the doctrine that all sentient beings are *tathāgatagarbha*.[11] And his *Prasphuṭapadā* is the first known commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* to introduce the *tathāgatagarbha* notion into the discussion of the *prakṛtistha-gotra*. This doctrinal elaboration was prepared for example by Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795), and it was continued by a host of later writers such as Abhayākaragupta.

Dharmamitra also refers to three characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) taught in certain Sūtras, namely the imaginarily constructed (*parikalpita*), the dependent (*paratantra*) and the perfect (*pariniṣpanna*). These *lakṣaṇas*, otherwise known as natures (*svabhāva*), as such are of course special features of the school of the Yogācārins/Vijñānavādins, whose philosophical system is largely articulated round them. And they are mentioned in the context of Prajñāpāramitā philosophy by Dignāga in his *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha*.[12] But on the basis of this evidence alone it cannot be concluded that Dharmamitra was himself a Vijñānavādin in the strict sense. A parallel set of categories, termed *kalpita*, *vikalpita* and *dharmatārūpa*, is to be found in the Maitreya-chapter of two of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras, the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* and the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā*;[13] and they are also evidently referred to by Haribhadra in his commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.[14] Dignāga's and Haribhadra's explanations of the *kalpita* and *vikalpita* differ somewhat from Dhar-

mamitra's interpretation of the first two *lakṣaṇas*.

It has also to be noted that Dharmamitra, like many other later masters who follow the synthetic Yogācāra-Madhyamaka established by Śāntarakṣita, makes abundant use of texts ascribed to Bhaṭṭāraka Maitreya(nātha), such as the ***Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra.***

As one of the last of the great masters of Indian Buddhism, Abhayākaragupta deserves particular attention, and his theory of the *gotra* is certainly of very considerable interest.

He clearly supports the assimilation of the *prakṛtistha-gotra* and the *tathāgatagarbha.*[15] And he points out that the *tathāgatagarbha* permeates the living (*jaṅgama,* i.e. sentient beings, *sattva*) only, to the exclusion of the insentient (*sthāvara*) world (which, according to certain East Asian Buddhist schools, is also destined to attain buddhahood since it too possesses the *buddha*-nature).[16] Unlike Dharmamitra, but like Haribhadra and the latter's predecessor Kamalaśīla, Abhayākara also devotes special attention to the doctrine of the *ekayāna,* the gnoseo-soteriological corollary of the theory of the *prakṛtistha-gotra* and of the *tathāgatagarbha* according to which all sentient beings as potential Buddhas are certain to achieve supreme and perfect Awakening (*anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*).[17] With regard to the *ekayāna* he quotes the ***Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*** and the ***Laṅkāvatārasūtra*** as well as Nāgārjuna's ***Niraupamyastava.***[18] Concerning the contrary view that postulates three ultimately separate and distinct vehicles, and which is associated with the Vijñānavāda and Maitreyanātha, Abhayākara explains it as based simply on the consideration that the doctrine of the *triyāna* serves to introduce beginning disciples to the teaching in conformity with their respective abilities, at which point it would not yet be appropriate to state that this doctrine is not absolutely and ultimately true and that only the *ekayāna* doctrine corresponds to the soteriological and gnoseological theory actually intended by the Buddha.[19]

Abhayākara furthermore clearly reveals how it is that the *ekayāna* is neither a mere polemical device serving to establish the claims of the Mahāyāna against the Hīnayāna nor even an exclusively soteriological concept, for philosophically it is the necessary corollary of the principle of the non-differentiation of the *prakṛtistha-gotra.* The *ekayāna* theory is in fact founded gnoseologically on the oneness of the knowledge of reality (*tattvajñāna*), which has as its 'object' the single undifferentiated reality (*tattva*) or *dharmadhātu.*[20] And it is of course intimately bound up with the non-differentiation of the *prakṛtistha-gotra* since this factor has

the nature of the single *dharmadhātu* according to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (i. 5).[21]

Concerning the *tathāgatagarbha* Abhayākara refers to verse ix. 37 of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* quoted in the commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (i. 148), a passage which deals with the universal presence of Thusness (*tathatā*) in all incarnate beings, saying that by his use of the expression *tathāgata* the author of the verse accepts the naturally luminous *dharmadhātu* which has as its characteristic the nonsubstantiality of both the individual (*pudgalanairātmya*) and the factors of existence (*dharmanairātmya*).[22]

In this way Abhayākara links together in a remarkable manner the scriptural teachings on the *prakṛtistha-gotra*, the *ekayāna*, the *dharmadhātu*, and the *tathāgatagarbha*, as well as on *nairātmya* (: *śūnyatā*) and *niḥsvabhāvatā*.[23]

But it is to be noted that *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* ix. 37 concerns only one single aspect of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory, i.e. that form of it that is founded on the universal presence of *tathatā*.[24] Now, to the extent that the *tathāgatagarbha* theory is connected with this aspect only, it does not necessarily commit its advocates to the doctrine that *all* sentient beings are certain to achieve Awakening and hence to the basic principle of the *ekayāna* doctrine.[25] It is for this reason that a Vijñānavādin remains free, even while maintaining the theory in the particular form set out in this verse, to hold that some *sattvas* are without *gotra* (*agotra*) or that their *gotra* is cut off, and also that there are three distinct and ultimately separate vehicles only one of which actually culminates in supreme and perfect Awakening or buddhahood.[26]

The aspect of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine based on *tathatā* found in *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* ix. 37 presupposes an interpretation in which the compound *tathāgata-garbha* is to be analysed as an adjectival compound (*bahuvrīhi*) meaning 'having as embryonic essence the *tathāgata*, containing the *tathāgata*'.[27] The *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*'s statement *sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ* then means 'All sentient beings contain the *tathāgata*' (as a spiritual potentiality within them).[28] A corresponding interpretation of the term is found in the explanation of *tathatā* as one of the three meanings intended by the scriptural statement *sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ* given in the commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (i. 148, where we find the analysis *tathāgataḥ tathataiṣāṃ garbhaḥ sarvasattvānām*), and also seemingly in the explanation of the *gotra* in the same commentary (i. 149–152, where we read *tathāgatadhātur eṣāṃ gar-*

bhaḥ sarvasattvānām, where *dhātu* has the meaning of element[29]).

This formulation of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine based on an interpretation of the term as an exocentric compound is parallel to, and in fact it may have been influenced by, a statement like the following one in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* where *dhātu* in the expression *tathāgatadhātu* refers to a relic contained in a *stūpa* (iii, p. 62): *yaḥ kaścit kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tathāgatasyârhataḥ samyaksambuddhasya parinirvṛtasya pūjāyai koṭiśaḥ saptaratnamayāṃs tathāgatadhātugarbhān stūpān kārayet, kārayitvā ca tān yāvajjīvaṃ . . . divyābhiḥ pūjābhiḥ satkuryād . . . tat kiṃ manyase, Kauśika, api nu sa kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tato nidānaṃ bahupuṇyaṃ prasavet/ Śakra āha: bahu, Bhagavan, bahu, Sugata . . .* 'If a son or daughter of family constructed by tens of millions *stūpas* made of the seven precious substances[30] and containing the relic (*dhātu*) of the Tathāgata[31] for the sake of worshipping the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddha who has passed into Nirvāṇa, and if they honoured these *stūpas* as long as they lived by all kinds of divine worship . . . , do you think, Kauśika [i.e. Śakra], that this son or daughter of family would accordingly produce much merit?—Śakra replied: Much, Lord, much, Sugata . . .' Inasmuch as this notion of the *stūpa* as *tathāgatadhātugarbha* is thus found in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, it could indeed be supposed that at least one forerunner of the classical *tathāgatagarbha* theory is attested in this body of texts. But, as already observed, the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine in the more strict sense actually appears explicitly in this literature only in an apparently later work, the *Adhyardhaśatikāprajñā pāramitā*.

According to the parallel and alternative interpretation, *tathāgatagarbha* is to be analysed as an endocentric nominal compound the first member of which has the value of a genitive (*ṣaṣṭhīsamāsa*) and which therefore means 'embryonic essence of the *tathāgata*'. This value is found for example when the theory refers to the *dharmakāya*, as explained in the commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* i. 146–147 (*tathāgatasyeme garbhāḥ sarvasattvāḥ*) and also in a number of Sūtra-texts.[32]

It is interesting to observe that the same multivalence, due to the fact that a compound word can properly be interpreted either as a *bahuvrīhi* or as a *tatpuruṣa*, is also to be found in the case of the word *dhātugarbha*, which may be either an epithet of the *stūpa* ('containing the relic') or a noun designating the *stūpa* (cf. also Sinhalese *dāgaba/dāgāba/dāgoba*).[33]

This *dhātu* of the Buddha is frequently regarded as being strictly equi-

valent to him and offerings made to a *stūpa* containing such a *dhātu* are then effective.[34] Harm intentionally done to a *stūpa* is correspondingly a most heinous act.[35]

Concerning the doctrinal background of the link between the *gotra*, *ekayāna* and *tathāgatagarbha* theories, it is to be observed that the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika master Kamalaśīla, who maintains that the *ekayāna* is of explicit and certain meaning (*nītārtha*), at the same time expounds both the *gotra* and *tathāgatagarbha* doctrines and holds that all sentient beings without exception are certain to attain Awakening. While we have no commentary by him on any of the larger Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras or on the *Abhisamayālamkāra* to which we could turn for an exposition of these points, Kamalaśīla's fundamental *Madhyamakāloka* provides very important observations on this complex of topics.[36]

Dharmamitra's and Abhayākaragupta's expositions of the subject are given below. It is to be noted that, unlike his predecessor Haribhadra (in his *Abhisamayālamkārālokā*) as well as his successor Abhayākaragupta, Dharmamitra in his explanation of the second chapter of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (following Haribhadra's **Sphuṭārthā*) has not gone into the question of the *ekayāna* in detail, although he has treated related topics.

DHARMAMITRA, *Prasphuṭapadā*
[T.T. vol. 91 (Ña: fol. 52b–56a)]

The teaching concerning the factors of penetration (*nirvedhabhāgīya*) having been analysed [53a],[37] the *gotra* which is the ground (*ādhāra*) for practice (*pratipatti*) is now to be investigated.

[54a4] If the *gotra* is accordingly the ground for all [practice of the paths], why is it not taught at the very beginning? This [sequence which discusses the *gotra* after its effects, was adopted] so that the result might be known through its cause [i.e. the *gotra*], in accordance with the statement: 'By reason of the cause of the *cittotpāda* [indicated in *Abhisamayālamkāra* i.18] and the other factors [indicated in the following verses], both *sambhāramārgas* are practised and the *prayogamārga* is then attained, and this is reckoned as being resident in *gotra* (*gotrastha*)'.[38] [But] others explain: Since this procedure has reference to the *gotra* that is effected (*abhisaṃskṛta*), whereas it would have been correct to speak at the very beginning of the *gotra* with respect to that *gotra* which is exist-

ent by nature (*prakṛtistha*), what has been taught here serves to make it known that there are two *gotras*.[39]

If these practices (*pratipatti*) have been indicated first because the *gotra* is the support (*pratiṣṭhā*) for practice, what is meant by saying that the *gotra* is the support for practice? What is termed *gotra* is therefore to be understood under the rubrics of (i) proof of its existence, (ii) nature, (iii) varieties, (iv) inferential mark, [53b] (v) good qualities, (vi) disadvantages, and (vii) the hermeneutic etymology.

(i) There are the elemental natures (*dhātu*), convinced adhesion (*adhimukti*), objectification of various practices, objectification of various results (*phala*), and exposition of the existence (*astitva*) of the *gotra*.[40]

(ii) Concerning the nature of the *gotra* it has somewhere been stated to be the *dharmadhātu* [as in the following scriptural statement]: 'O Jina-putras, what is termed the *gotra* of the *bodhisattva* assumes the *dharma-dhātu*, it is as extensive as space (*ākāśa*), and it is naturally luminous (*prakṛtiprabhāsvara*); the *bodhisattvas* residing in it are born in the family of the Buddha-Bhagavats of the past . . . future . . . and present'.[41]

An objection [against the doctrine of the varieties of the *gotra*] has been raised since it has been stated that, because there is no differentiation in the *dharmadhātu*, the *gotra* cannot contain differences.[42] It has also been stated: 'O Mañjuśrī, if the *dharmadhātu* is one and if the *bhūtakoṭi* is one, how can one suppose that there are recipients (*bhājana*) and non-recipients?'[43]

Moreover, it is known that what is termed *gotra* has been considered by some to be certainly a particularity of the sense-bases (*āyatanaviśe-ṣa*).[44] In the Abhidharma it has been stated: 'Some [Arhats, vi. 56a] are of their *gotra* from the outset, while others become so by a process of perfection'.[45]

Also, with regard to the Mahāyāna, it is stated in the **Daśadharmaka-sūtra**: 'Just as one knows [the presence of] fire [by inferring it] from smoke and [the presence of] water [by inferring it] from aquatic birds, similarly one knows [the presence of] the *gotra* of the intelligent *bodhi-sattva*[46] by means of [its] inferential mark (*liṅga*)'.[47] Concerning the inferential mark in this context, [54a] this refers to the fact that there are certain particular natural marks in a case where there exists some person possessing a particular sense-base (*āyatana*). But it is not correct to speak of an inferential mark in this case where there is existence of the

dharmadhātu, because the *dharmadhātu* is universal (*sāmānyavartin*).[48] Hence the Lord (*bhaṭṭāraka*, viz. Maitreyanātha) has stated that here the *gotra* has the *dharmadhātu* as its nature.[49] Nevertheless, it is not the case that there are [therefore] no varieties [of the *gotra*]; although it is settled that in reality the *gotra* is one, still what the comparison has indicated to be the intended meaning is that the postulation of difference as such depends on people's special *āyatanas* due to nature or to the process of perfection.[50]

(iii) As for these varieties, it has indeed been already stated in principle in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* [ii, p. 63] that they are the Mahāyāna [i.e. the Bodhisattva], the Pratyekabuddha, the Ārya-Śrāvaka, the undetermined (*aniyata*), and the non-*gotra* (*agotra*). However, this allusion to a cut-off *gotra* refers simply to the difficulty of attaining liberation. Otherwise how does one interpret the scriptural statements in the *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 'Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, all sentient beings are *tathāgatagarbha*(s)'[51] and the *(Samādhirāja-) Candrapradīpasūtra*, 'There exists here no sentient being who is not a recipient (*bhājana*): all these living beings without exception will become Awakened'?[52]

(iv) With respect to the inferential marks (*liṅga*), a verse mentions compassion (*kāruṇya*), convinced adhesion (*adhimukti*), constancy (*kṣānti*), and the realization of the wholesome (*śubha*) as the marks of the *gotra*.[53]

(v-vi) [The advantages (*anuśaṃsa*) of the *gotra* are furthermore mentioned in verse iii. 8 and the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in verse iii. 7 of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*.][54]

(vii) [54b2] With regard to the hermeneutic etymology (*nirukta*), the word *go-* has the sense of protecting a region or the earth; this is because it has been stated that the scholar is to know that the word *go-* has the meanings of mountain, light, earth, vajra, heaven, cow, and water.[55] Also, the word *kula* derives from the fact that [the Bodhisattva born in the *kula* 'family' of the Buddha] descends (*lī-*) into evil (*ku*) forms of existence, such as hell, in his compassion. Others follow the explanation on linguistic roots, where it has been said that a *kula* is so called because it is the support of an assemblage of qualities.[56] As to the meaning of the term, *gotra* is so called because it realizes qualities (*guṇottāraṇa*),[57] for it has the meaning of 'germ' (*bīja*) and 'capacity'.[58]

[Haribhadra's] statement '[The *gotra*] has the nature of the *dharmadhātu*'[59] has in mind the fact that in the initial summary it was stated that

[the *gotra*] is the ground for practice and has the nature of the *dharma-dhātu* [*Abhisamayālaṃkāra* i. 5]. The *dharma* thus explained comprises the fourfold practice (*pratipatti*), etc.[60]

As for being a ground (*ādhāra*), the *dharmadhātu*, it has been stated that what is termed *gotra* indicates the thirteenfold *bodhisattva* whose nature is connected with this by comprehension (*adhigama*).[61] Concerning the *bodhisattva*, the path leading to attainment of the Immortal (*amṛta*) is not this [*bodhisattva per se*]; but by being made to eschew evil ways and to adopt the superior way, sentient beings understand the bad opinions after having seen [it]. For this reason one speaks of a *bodhisattva*; and hence, because the *sattva* is for the sake of establishment in Awakening (*bodhi*), the *bodhi-sattva* is so named [55a].

Concerning what is termed the thirteenfold [*bodhisattva*], the thirteen are counted in the following manner. First there are the four [*nirvedha-bhāgīyas*] comprised in the *prayogamārga*; the fifth is the *darśanamārga*; the sixth is the *bhāvanāmārga*; the seventh and ninth are disconnexion and the attainment of disconnexion; the eighth is from the [third] Pra-bhākarī stage (*bhūmi*) to the sixth [stage]; the tenth is the seventh [stage]; the eleventh is from the Acalā [or eighth stage] to the Dharmameghā [or tenth stage]; the twelfth is the one having only one more birth (*ekajāti-pratibaddha*) and the one in his final existence (*caramabhavika*); and the thirteenth is the *viśeṣamārga*, the *vajropamasamādhi*.[62]

Since the [*bodhisattva*] on the stage involving only one more birth as-sists living beings by the Buddha-activity, ordinary disciples (*vineya*) are established in the teaching (*śāsana*), so that it is stated: 'Thereafter, by means of [four kinds of] oblique expressions (*abhisaṃdhi*) such as introduction to the teaching (*avatāraṇābhisaṃdhi*) in accordance with one's disposition . . .'[63] In this connexion, in order to introduce some living beings to this teaching, [the Blessed One] has spoken concern-ing the *parikalpita*, the *paratantra* and the *pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇa*,[64] [teaching] first that there exists a self (*ātman*), an individual (*pudgala*) and an element (*khams = dhātu*) as a means for eliminating the ob-stacles (*āvaraṇa*) of these [living beings], [next] that all *dharmas* are non-existent (*med pa*) and that they originate in dependence, and [then] that all *dharmas* are free from error (*viparyāsa*) and are naturally luminous (*prakṛtiprabhāsvara*). . .[65]

[Dharmamitra then goes on to mention other teachings that are inten-tional (*ābhiprāyika*) inasmuch as they refer to a certain meaning without expressing it directly and explicitly (fol. 55a8–56a4).]

.[56a4] Saying: 'In accordance with objectification in graded stages of comprehension belonging to the Vehicle of the Auditors (*śrāvakayāna*) and the other Vehicles. . . .',[66] [Haribhadra] gives the stated teaching, namely that since the Auditors (*śrāvaka*) do not maintain, as do the Yogācārins, that there are different *gotras* and that there is a cut-off *gotra*, they therefore hold that all sentient beings are of undetermined (*aniyata*) *gotra*.[67] Following this doctrine, the *gotra* of your [*Śrāvaka*] system is of one nature; but the *gotras* may still be different simply because of the different comprehensions (*adhigama*) brought about by conditions. Similarly, while we also hold that the nature of the *gotra* is in accord with the exclusively single *dharmadhātu*, we still hold the differentiated *gotras* to be thirteen consequent on the graded stages of comprehension of this [*dharmadhātu*]. This is what is meant by the well-known example mentioned in the treatise.[68]—'As a simple teaching' (*sla chos ñid du*),[69] namely the example well-known in common usage that is simple to set forth and understand.[70]

ABHAYĀKARAGUPTA, *Marmakaumudī*
[T.T. Vol. 92 (da: fol 54a-57a)]

In his commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the *Marmakaumudī*, Abhayākaragupta takes up the theme of the *gotra* when commenting on the first chapter, the *Sarvākāra-jñatācārya-parivarta*. On the subject of the non-differentiation of the *bodhisattvagotra* in particular he has the following to say (fol. 56b1–57a3).

The *bodhisattvagotra* is pure by nature (*prakṛtiviśuddha*) [although] hidden in adventitious impurities (*āgantukamala*). The *tathāgatagarbha*, the dispersal of the darkness of factors such as ignorance, termed naturally existent, is the support (*pratiṣṭhā*) of the twenty-two progressive productions (*utpāda*) of the thought (*citta*) [of Awakening].[71] And accordingly Ārya Vimuktisena has interpreted it as relating to the four factors of penetration (*nirvedhabhāgīya*), etc., with respect to the *cittotpāda*, etc.[72] As a consequence, that Haribhadra's *nirvedhabhāgīyas* are the support of the *dharmadhātu* is incorrect.[73]

Concerning this [*prakṛtisthagotra* of the *bodhisattva*], the absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) of all *dharmas*, since [its] characteristic is the series of *āryadharmas*, it is the *dharmadhātu*.[74] And that this is being taught here is shown by the treatise which states: 'Because of the non-

differentiation of the *dharmadhātu* the *gotra* cannot be differentiated'.[75]
—Objection: How can one then differentiate, saying that this is the *buddhagotra*, this the *pratyekabuddhagotra*, and this the *śrāvakagotra*?[76]—
The treatise has given the following answer: 'By virtue of the differentiation of the supported factors (*ādheyadharma*) one speaks of its differentiation',[77] i.e. because of possession of the supported factors of the *buddha* and so forth.[78] This *dharma* is [indeed] without differentiation; yet there is differentiation of the *gotra* here owing to differentiation of the [supported factors]—'just as in the undifferentiated sky (*ākāśa*) there are all those proceeding along [various] ways such as the way of the sun, that of a bird, that of a butterfly'. . .[79]

'What is the support-object?'[80]—because of what sort of *gotra* does one objectively speak of existence [of the *bodhisattva*]?—'There is no support-object'[81]—i.e. a *gotra* of the [*bodhisattva*] does not exist as a thing.[82] And such is the meaning of *dharmadhātu*.

[57a] Whatever group (*skandha*), etc., may be the object (*viṣaya*) of the customary expression Bodhisattva, there is absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*), Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and *dharmatā*; perfected in pure nature in its *dharmadhātu* this will be comprehended, and the name "*bodhi*" is given to this. What is *gotra* consequently is no thing. This *śūnyatā* is due to the characteristic of no thing. Or again, with regard to Awakening, there is no support in what is *gotra*. By surface convention (*saṃvṛti*) and by mutual non-differentiation there is no [real] differentiation into a support and a supported (*ādhārādheyabhāva*), for this [differentiation] is fabricated by designation (*prajñapti*) [only].

'How so?'[83]—how being *dharmadhātu* is it precisely *bodhi-gotra*?[84]—All factors (*sarvadharma*) have been set out with reference to the six *adhigamadharmas*.[85]

Abhayākaragupta then goes on to comment on the *Aṣṭa's* statement (i, p. 18): 'The Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva exercises himself in non-attachment (*asaktatāyāṃ śikṣate*)', and he next turns to explain the object (*ālambana*, *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* i. 40) as 'all *dharmas*' (fol. 57b1 sq.).

ABHAYĀKARAGUPTA, *Munimatālaṃkāra*
[T.T. Vol. 101(Ha)]

In Abhayākaragupta's independent treatise entitled the "Ornament of the Sage's Doctrine" we find a more detailed discussion of the *gotra*

in connexion with the question of the *ekayāna*, both in Chapters i and ii which treat of the *bodhicitta* and its realization (*bhāvanā*) and in Chapter iii which deals with the eight *abhisamayas* under the first of which, the *sarvākārajñatā*, the *gotra* theory is explained by the commentators, as has already been noticed above.

Chapter i of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* contains the following observations on these interrelated topics (fol. 182b6–183a8).

The Prajñāpāramitā itself, the Bhagavatī, is the essence of the Mahāyāna, the *ekayāna* precisely. The system postulating (three)[86] different vehicles (*yāna*) was set out by the Blessed One (*bhagavat*) in order to introduce the childish (*bāla*) (progressively to the teaching); it is not of certain meaning (*nītārtha*).[87] This is what has been stated in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*: 'No system postulating (different) vehicles indeed exists (in certain meaning): I teach that the vehicle is one (ultimately). [But] in order to attract the childish I speak of different vehicles'.[88] [183a] Although [a difference is] postulated according to whether one has little preparation (*sambhāra*) or immeasurable preparation, the *yāna* is not different [in reality]; for the *dharmadhātu* is without differentiation. This (difference of vehicles) is taught [then merely] as a gate of entry (to the Mahāyāna). And the Ārya [Nāgārjuna] has declared: 'O Lord, because of the non-differentiation of the *dharmadhātu* there is no difference of vehicles; you have spoken of these vehicles in order to introduce sentient beings' (progressively to the teaching).[89]

Consequently (it is objected), it is the teaching concerning the one vehicle that is intentional (*ābhiprāyika*), and [only] because of the equivalence (which [the teacher] has in mind) of the vehicle having the characteristic of the *dharmadhātu* (the intended foundation, *dgoṅs gźi*), etc., has the oneness (of the vehicle) been taught.[90]—[Reply:] As for this objection, it has been expressly stated in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*: 'O Śāriputra, in the future you will be the Samyaksambuddha named Padmaprabha'[91] And [an interpretation which postulates several ultimately different vehicles] is not in accordance with this explicit canonical statement (of certain meaning).

In the *Daśadharmakasūtra* it is stated that, in order to indicate the teaching of the three vehicles as (being) an expedient (*upāya*), the Blessed One taught the *ekayāna* intentionally to beings to be trained (*vineya*) (as an indirect meaning);[92] for (if it be asked why three vehicles were taught) it would have been impossible to introduce these disciples

saying that this teaching of three vehicles is [nothing but] an expedient employed by the Blessed One, and that it is not true. It is [then simply] in accordance with this [consideration] that Ārya Maitreya has taught in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (in the *Dharmaparyeṣṭi* chapter) that the teaching of the *ekayāna* is intentional (*ābhiprāyika*).[93]

Abhayākaragupta next proceeds to discuss the gnoseo-soteriological questions that arise with respect to the *bodhi* of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, the 'conversion' of their two vehicles into the Bodhisattvayāna or Buddhayāna, and their final attainment of buddhahood. He then writes the following (fol. 186a7–186b7).

In the *Prajñāpāramitā* the [Blessed One] has stated: 'If they were to produce the thoughts (*citta*) directed toward complete and perfect Awakening, I place no obstacle in the way of the [resulting] wholesome root'.[94] And in the *Samādhirājasūtra* it is stated: 'All these living beings will become Awakened: [186b] there exists here no sentient being who is not a recipient (*bhājana*)'.[95] Owing to the adventitiousness of the impurities and because of the natural luminosity of the *citta* (since it is *śūnya*) (because it is exempt from the unitary and multiple, the nature of *citta* which is unborn in own being is luminous, and it is stated that all the darkness of mental construction is illuminated), there indeed exists in all living beings the capacity[96] for Buddhahood, as has been correctly explained to be the intended meaning. Thus, by saying in the Sūtra 'All sentient beings are *tathāgatagarbha*(s)',[97] the Blessed One has fully set out the capacity that all have for comprehending (or: attaining) the level (*pada*) of supreme Awakening. (According to the above mentioned scripture, whereas the *tathāgatagarbha* does not permeate (*vyāp-*) all the insensible (*sthāvara*) as well as the living (*jaṅgama*), it permeates the conscious series (*cittasaṃtāna*) of the living.)[98] For in the *Ratnagotravibhāga(-Commentary)*, where it is said [i. 148] (quoting the Bodhichapter of the *Mahāyānasutrālaṃkāra*):[99] 'Although in all without differentiation, Thusness (*tathatā*) once it has reached purity (from adventitious impurities) (is) this *tathāgata*-ness; all living beings therefore have this (*tathāgata*) as embryonic essence' etc., (teaching that all living beings possess the *buddhagarbha*), Ārya Maitreya too has, by using the expression *tathāgata* (in this text), accepted the statement that the *dharmadhātu*, having the characteristic of non-substantiality (*nairātmya*) of the individual (*pudgala*) and the *dharma*s, is naturally luminous

(*prakṛtiprabhāsvara*).[100]

Abhayākaragupta then takes up the question of the gnoseological foundation of the *ekayāna* theory (fol. 186b7–187a6).

Moreover, the word *yāna* denotes the path (*mārga*) leading to the place of *nirvāṇa*, i.e. the nature of knowledge of reality (*tattvajñāna*) (the means of progression), and *nirvāṇa* (the goal of progression). . .[101] [187a] For liberation (viz. *nirvāṇa*) is attained by knowledge of reality only, and not otherwise. Now this reality (*tattva*) (comprehended by transcending discriminating knowledge [*prajñā*]) is only (*eva*) one; although theory (*dṛṣṭi*) is differentiated (in virtue of this or that theory), the real (*vastu*) [i.e. the 'object' of *tattva-jñāna*] is not objectified as diverse realities, for this would involve over-extension (*atiprasaṅga*). Therefore, (there being no multiplicity in reality,) gnosis (*jñāna*) that has as its object reality having a single nature is also only one (in the mode of) nature. It being in fact gnosis consisting of the *buddha*'s and *bodhisattva*'s exact knowledge of reality, it has reality as its object; for it is the counteragent against confusion (*sammoha*) in all its forms. Partial (*prādeśika*) knowledge (of the Śrāvaka and the other) [on the contrary] will not comprehend reality; for this (namely understanding reality through partial knowledge) would involve over-extension, and thus (by comprehension through partial knowledge) everybody would see reality. Therefore, (the *yāna* being the *mārga* and this being established as one,) that very gnosis which directly knows (*sākṣātkṛ-*) reality consisting in non-substantiality (*nairātmya*) of *pudgala* and *dharmas* is the exact path allowing *nirvāṇa* to be attained, and there is no other [such path]. In view of the preceding, the vehicle is only (*eva*) one.

After having discussed the three natures (*svabhāva*) and non-substantiality (*nairātmya*) in connexion with the *pariniṣpannasvabhāva* (fol. 187b–188a), Abhayākaragupta concludes his first chapter with the following observation (fol. 188b4–6):

Thus (or: therefore) the nature of the Mahāyāna is established as being only the one vehicle (*ekayāna*) and the absolute (*paramārtha*) absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) of all *dharmas*. This (the Great Vehicle) is the Bhagavatī Prajñāpāramitā. This (Prajñāpāramitā) is to

be known as the absolutely real (*pāramārthika*) *bodhicitta*, which consists of the non-differentiation of the Empty (comprehension of *śūnyatā*) and compassion.

Chapter ii of the ***Munimatālaṃkāra*** begins explaining the process of realization (*bhāvanā*) of the *bodhicitta* by recalling that all living beings are endowed with the certain capacity[102] to eliminate the obstructions, viz. the *kleśāvaraṇa* and the *jñeyāvaraṇa* (fol. 188b7).

[188a8] Furthermore, the teaching concerning the *ekayāna* being thus quite certain, it has been established that apart from the *dharmadhātu* having the nature of the non-dual gnosis (*advayajñāna*) of transcending discriminative knowledge (*prajñā*) and means (*upāya*),[103] [189b] there exists no other vehicle of liberation. Therefore (if it be asked why different forms of *bhāvanā* have nevertheless been taught), when the Blessed One teaches *bhāvanā* by introducing divisions in the true (*satya*) (and the Prajñāpāramitā and Mantra), this involves differentiation in name only (*nāmamātra*) in accordance with the different convictions (*adhimukti*) of beings to be trained (*vineya*); and this serves as an introduction. Consequently, while reality (*tattva*) itself is without differentiation, in order to conform to the spiritual propensities of sentient beings toward one thing or another (e.g. the impermanent) with this or that term (*nāman*) (e.g. impermanent) in the Sūtras and Abhidharma, the Buddha-Bhagavats have given instructions while proceeding as if there were differentiations.

Abhayākaragupta explains that this procedure involves teaching impermanence to persons whose faculties are weak (*hīnendriya*) by eradicating any imputation (*samāropa*) of reality, only self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) to persons with middling faculties by eradicating the imputation of [a real duality between] object and subject (*grāhyagrāhaka*), and *śūnyatā* or absence of discursive development (*prapañca*) to persons with sharp faculties by eradicating all imputation whatsoever. This is what Dharmakīrti was referring to when he wrote in his ***Pramāṇavārttika*** (ii. 253cd): 'But release results from the theory of *śūnyatā*, and the realization of the remainder [viz. *anitya*, *duḥkha* and *anātman*] has that purpose' (fol. 189b).[104] Also, the postulating of a single cause such as a creator (*īśvara*), the Sāṃkhya's *pradhāna*, or the philosophergrammarian's *śabdabrahman* rests on names only, which have then to be

surmounted by certain teachings serving as counteragents (*pratipakṣa*) (fol. 190a).

In his treatment of *sarvākārajñatā*, the first of the eight *abhisamayas* which are the subject of Chapter iii of the ***Munimatālaṃkāra***, Abhayā-karagupta provides a fuller statement of his theory of the *gotra* (fol. 217b2–219a5).

[217b2] Because (according to the commentary on the *Pañca*) the *dhar-madhātu*, which has precisely as its characteristic the absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) of all *dharmas*, is the [motivating] cause (*hetu*) of the *āryadharmas*,[105] use is made of the verbal equivalents (*paryāya*) *gotra* existent by nature (*prakṛtisthaṃ gotram*), ground (*gźi = ādhāra*) base ([*ñe bar*]*rton pa = upastambha*), [motivating] cause (*rgyu = hetu*), foundation (*rten = niśraya*), *upaniṣad* (*ñe bar gnas pa*), precursor (*sṅon du 'gro ba = pūrvaṃgama*), residence (*gnas = nilaya*), germ (*sa bon = bīja*),[106] element (*khams = dhātu*), and nature (*raṅ bźin = prakṛti*).[107] It is thus that this *gotra*, which is very pure by nature (*prakṛtiviśuddha*) [although] concealed by adventitious impurities (*āgantukamala*), once it has become freed from all impurities (owing to the absence of the hindrances, viz. repetition of passions, evil friends, lack, and de-pendence[108]) shines forth; it is then like the ore of iron, copper, silver and gold in rocks (as is said in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*).[109] This very *dharmatā*, the *ātma-gotra* (*bdag ñid kyi rigs*) (existing in the *śūnyatā* [of] the conscious series of the sentient being) is termed (in the Sūtra) *tathāgatagarbha*.[110] Although this *gotra* of nature (*prakṛti*) exists, living beings so long as they are covered by adventitious impurities such as ig-norance (*avidyā*) are not completely Awakened. [But] once they are freed from all the impurities of dichotomizing conceptualization (*vikalpa*) (by constant practice of the path), there is achieved Awakening wherein the very pure *dharmadhātu* (because of freedom from the adventitious impurities) shines forth. Therefore (buddhahood not being achieved in virtue of the bare existence of the *dharmadhātu*), [218a] the saint (*ārya*) in particular (free from the four disadvantages)[111] (is) *gotra*;[112] and as the 'cause of application' (*pravṛttinimitta*) of the word 'bodhisat-tva',[113] (the *gotra*) is referred to as the ground (*ādhāra*) for the twenty-two *bodhicittotpādas*[114] and of the practices (*pratipatti*) of the outfit (*saṃnāha*) connected with wish (*chanda*) as the particularity of this (viz. the *cittotpāda*).[115] So the *gotra* is to be known as the support (*pratiṣṭhā*)

of the six factors of comprehension (*adhigamadharma*, nos. 1–6),[116] the counteragent (*pratipakṣa*, no. 7) and elimination (*prahāṇa*, no. 8), surmounting (*yoṅs su gtugs pa = paryupayoga*, no. 9) the preceding, *prajñā* accompanied by compassion (no. 10), superiority over the Auditors (*śiṣya* [= *śrāvaka*], no. 11), progressive action for the benefit of others (*parārthānukrama*, no. 12), and effortless action (*ayatnavṛtti*) of gnosis (no. 13). This is what has been stated in the relevant verses of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* [i. 37–38], as well as by Ārya Vimuktisena in his commentary on the text of the *Pañca*. Consequently, concerning the *cittotpāda*, with respect to the four *nirvedhabhāgīyas* [of the *prayogamārga*], the *darśanamārga* and the *bhāvanāmārga* [i.e. nos. 1–6] the *bodhisattva* in each case has been called '*bodhisattva*' by the Blessed One.[117] The counteragent [no. 7] is the Prajñāpāramitā; elimination [no. 8], namely (elimination) of the obstacles (*vipakṣa*), is the *dharmadhātu*, the characteristic of complete purity (from any adventitious impurities). (According to the *Śuddhimatī*,[118]) *paryupayoga* 'surmounting' [no. 9] of both counteragent and elimination is progression to the ultimate limit, i.e. ultimate perfection of the perfect counteragent and ultimate exhaustion of the obstacle. Haribhadra indeed explains *paryupayoga* as the condition of elimination of dichotomizing conceptualization connected with origination (of the counteragent) and stoppage (elimination).[119]

Now the *prakṛtistha-gotra* comes from beginningless time (*anādikālāgata*) and is attained in virtue of *dharmatā* (*dharmatāpratilabdha*) [218b]. The developed (*samudānīta*) [*gotra* on the other hand] is attained by the continual practice of the previous wholesome roots. The temporarily determined (*niyata*) (not ultimately determined) [*gotra*] is the *gotra* of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha. The permanently determined (*niyata*) one is the *tathāgata-gotra*. The *gotra* of the Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha and Tathāgata may be (temporarily) undetermined since it is removable (*hārya*) through conditions (*pratyaya*). But that the *gotra* is by reason of this statement [really] differentiated is not correct.[120] For the Blessed One also has stated:[121] 'O Mañjuśrī, if the *dharmadhātu* is one, if the *tathatā* is one and if the *bhūtakoṭi* is one, how is it that one speaks of one who is a recipient and one who is not a recipient?' (such a designation is not correct). This is true.[122] And thus, because of difference in the factors of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, the supported (*ādheya*), the *gotras* of the Śrāvakas and the others (the Pratyekabuddhas) are differentiated in customary usage; for example, in the case of the

sky (ākāśa) which is without differentiation, with respect to the different [entities] who have their [various] ways [in it] one speaks of the way of a being, the way of the birds, and the way of the sun.[123] Hence, when the comprehension (adhigama) of great Awakening is preceded by the comprehensions of the Awakenings of the Śrāvakas and the others (the Pratyekabuddhas) these [the two latter] have been indicated as temporary, as a consequence of which it has been taught that they are connected with the gotra of the Śrāvakas and the others (the Pratyekabuddhas). According to customary usage, those persons who progressively cultivate supreme bodhi attaining the Pramuditā and the other [stages of the Bodhisattva] to start with (without depending on another [path]) are said to have the mahāyāna-gotra. A differentiation of the gotra is therefore not [in fact] inconsistent [with the theory of the undifferentiated gotra and the ekayāna]; but this (differentiation of the gotra) is not real (tattvataḥ).

As has been stated (concerning the non-differentiation of the gotra): 'Where there are no conditionings (saṃskāra) whatsoever, there is the unconditioned (asaṃskṛta). It is equal to the gotra of the Āryas; this gotra is without differentiation in virtue of equality (samatā) with space (ākāśa); this gotra [219a] is permanent (nitya) in virtue of the fact that all dharmas are of one value (ekarasa); and because this gotra is always dharmatā, it is knowledge, etc.'[124]

Concerning the hermeneutic etymology (nirukta), because the good qualities are realized—produced—from it,[125] it is gotra. Again, because they go (gam-) sentient beings are go-; and because of protecting them (trā-) it is go-tra-. Again (according to the Śuddhimatī),[126] here gam-(the root of go-) is used in the sense of being present; for example, the ākāśa is universally present, and accordingly go- meaning 'to go, be present' [is] the supported factor (ādheyadharma). And because of protection, holding unshakeably (indestructibly), one speaks of a go-tra, viz. (what is termed) support.[127]

Question: Now how is the dharmadhātu, which is without own being (svabhāva), the support (pratiṣṭhā) of the cittotpāda?[128]—[Reply:] For example, (it having been stated by Ārya Nāgārjuna in his Vigrahavyāvartanī that 'All things prevail for somebody for whom this śūnyatā prevails, [but] nothing prevails for somebody for whom śūnyatā does not prevail'),[129] this is like (being the support of) the removal of darkness by the rays of moon and sun [in] the sky (ākāśa) which is [nevertheless] without own being.[130]

CONCLUSION

With Dharmamitra the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine enters clearly and definitively into the commentarial literature on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* in connexion with the explication of the theory of the undifferentiated *prakṛtisthagotra*. These two theories were of course already associated in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. And in the canonical literature of the Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras the *tathāgatagarbha* theory is attested in the *Adhyardhaśatikā*, evidently a later Prajñāpāramitā text showing certain Tantrik influences.[131] Previous to Dharmamitra, a synthesis of the *prajñāpāramitā* and the *tathāgatagarbha* was elaborated by Kamalaśīla.

The *tathāgatagarbha* notion may well be linked with the concept of the *stūpa* or *caitya* as *tathāgatadhātugarbha* which is to be found also in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, but the connexion has not been made altogether explicit in our sources.

Emphasis on the *ekayāna* (which is lacking in Dharmamitra's *Prasphuṭapadā*) is to be found in both Haribhadra's great commentary and, earlier, in Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*. Its significance as a gnoseo-soteriological principle was worked out in a final form for Indian Buddhism by Abhayākaragupta in the context of the theory of the *prakṛtisthagotra* and *tathāgatagarbha*. The association between the *ekayāna* and the *tathāgatagarbha* theories goes back at least as far as the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra*.[132]

In Abhayākaragupta's comments it is especially interesting to find the assimilation of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *prakṛtisthagotra* whose nature is *dharmadhātu*, in other words non-substantiality (*nairātmya*) of both *pudgala* and *dharmas*, absence of own being (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) and Emptiness. The *Marmakaumudī* thus mentions absence of own being and *śūnyatā* in connexion with the *prakṛtisthagotra*, which has the nature of *dharmadhātu*.[133] The *Munimatālaṃkāra* explains that the *dharmadhātu* has the characteristic of non-substantiality of *pudgala* and *dharmas*, and that it is naturally luminous.[134] The *ekayāna* also is linked with absolute absence of own being.[135] (And a note in small letters in the Peking edition of the Tibetan translation of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* specifies that there is natural luminosity of *citta* since it is empty (*śūnya*) of all impurities.[136]) Abhayākaragupta's comments accordingly support the connextion of the *prakṛtisthagotra* of the Prajñāpāramita literature not only with the *tathāgatagarbha* and *ekayāna*, but also with non-substantiality, absence of own being and *śūnyatā*.[137]

Apart from the 'Tathāgatagarbha School' represented by certain Mahāyāna sūtras (such as the *Tathāgatagarbha*, the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda* and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*) and the *Ratnagotravibhaga* together with its commentary, this complex of problems seems to have come to the fore in India above all in the synthetic Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school which was firmly established in the eighth century by Śāntarakṣita, and whose masters were responsible for several important commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

It is probably due at least in part to the great influence of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school in Tibet from the time of Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla that the *gotra* and *ekayāna* (as connected in particular with the Prajñāpāramitā literature) and the *tathāgatagarbha* (connected earlier with a distinct corpus of Sūtras and Śāstras) came together to play such a prominent and important part in Tibetan Buddhist thought.[138] This theory evidently had a deep influence on the later Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas too, in particular on the Tibetan representatives of this school who lay special emphasis on these three concepts which they explicate in the framework of the *śūnyatā* theory as elaborated by them.

NOTES

[1] E. Conze, *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (London 1961), p. 105 note 2. References hereunder to the folios of Tibetan translations of Indian texts contained in the Bstan 'gyur relate to the Peking edition as reproduced in the Japanese reprint published by the Tibetan Tripiṭaka Research Institute (Tokyo and Kyoto). Prints of other editions of the Bstan 'gyur were unfortunately unavailable during the writing of the present paper.

[2] On the meanings of the term *gotra*, and in particular on the two meanings '(spiritual) element, germ, capacity' and '(spiritual) lineage, class, category' which might be described respectively as the intensional and extensional meanings of the word when the *gotra* as germ determines the classification of persons possessing it in a *gotra* as category, see the present writer's article in *BSOAS* 39 (1976) p. 341sq.

[3] "Ārya and Bhadanta Vimuktisena on the *gotra*-theory of the Prajñāpāramitā," *Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Indiens (Festschrift für Erich Frauwallner)*, *WZKSO* 12–13 (1968/1969), pp. 303–317.

[4] Ratnākaraśānti's other work on the subject, a commentary on the *AA* entitled *Śuddhimatī*, (or: *Śuddhamatī*) will be referred to below.

[5] Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byuṅ* (ed. A. Schiefner), p. 171. Dharmākara(datta) was the religious name of Arcaṭa (ca. 730–790?) (cf. Durvekamiśra, *Arcaṭāloka* [GOS ed.], p. 233).

Tāranātha accordingly distinguishes our Dharmamitra from another master having the same name whom he describes as a Vaibhāṣika, and who wrote a commentary (*Ṭīkā*) on Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*. This earlier Dharmamitra is in fact reported to have been a pupil of Guṇaprabha (see Bu·ston, *Chos 'byuṅ* II, p. 161), which would make him approximately a contemporary of Ārya Vimuktisena.

[6] Cf. Bu·ston, *Chos 'byuṅ* II, p. 140; Tāranātha, *Rgya gar chos 'byuṅ*, p. 153.

[7] According to the colophon of the Tibetan translation in the Bstan·'gyur. Cf. Tāranātha, *op. cit.*, pp. 189 sq., 198–199.

[8] Exceptions to this classification were for example Ña·dbon·Kun·dga'·dpal (cf. *Théorie*, p. 140) and other masters of the so-called Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*) who undertook a harmonization of the Madhyamaka and the Vijñaptimātra.

[9] See e.g. Ña·dbon·Kun·dga'·dpal's *Yid kyi mun sel*, fol. 237a (translated in *Théorie*, p. 140).

[10] T.T. Fol. 54a.—Cf. for example Tsoṅ·kha·pa, *Legs bśad gser phreṅ*. fol. 210a *Théorie*, p. 122).

[11] On the meanings of this statement see below, pp. 287–8.

[12] Dignāga, *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha* 27–29:

prajñāpāramitāyāṃ hi trīn samāśritya deśanā |
kalpitaṃ paratantraṃ ca pariniṣpannam eva ca ||
nāstityādipadaiḥ sarvaṃ kalpitaṃ vinivāryate |
māyopamādidṛṣṭāntaiḥ paratantrasya deśanā ||
caturdhā vyavadānena pariniṣpannakīrtanam |
prajñāpāramitāyāṃ hi nānyā buddhasya deśanā ||

[13] Chapter 83 of the Tibetan version. Cf. E. Conze and S. Iida, in *Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris 1968), p. 238.

These three aspects cannot, however, according to many commentators be simply equated with the three *lakṣaṇas* or *svabhāvas* of the Vijñānavāda. Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 325–327, 343, 147–148.

[14] *AAĀ* 1.28–30 (p. 47): *tat punas trividhaṃ rūpam / kalpitaṃ rūpaṃ grāhyagrāha-karūpeṇa kalpitatvāt/ vikalpitaṃ rūpam asadbhūtaparikalpena jñānam eva tathā prati-bhāsate iti vikalpitatvāt/ dharmatārūpaṃ tattvato 'rūpam eva śūnyatārūpeṇa parini-ṣpannatvāt/*

[15] *Marmakaumudī*, T.T. fol. 56b.

[16] See *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 186b. On this point see *Théorie*, p. 152 note.

[17] On the link between the *ekayāna* and *tathāgatagarbha* doctrines see also the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādasūtra* (*Théorie*, p. 182 sq.; *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha*, (Publications de l'École française d'Extrême Orient Vol. LXXXVIII, Paris. 1973) p.142 sq.).

[18] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 183a.

[19] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 183a.

[20] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 186b-187a. Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 180, 185.

[21] *Marmakaumudī* T. T. fol. 56b; *Munimatālaṃkāra*, fol. 182b sq.; 218b-219a.

[22] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 186b.

[23] The connexion between the *ekayāna*, the *prakṛtistha-gotra* and the *tathāgata-garbha* on the one side and *nairātmya*, *niḥsvabhāvatā* and *śūnyatā* on the other is especially noteworthy. The question of the relationship between the *tathāgatagarbha* and *śūnyatā* is taken up in the *RGV* (J) i. 154 sq., as well as in some of the relevant Sūtras. Cf. *Théorie*, p. 313 sq.; *Le Traité du tathāgatagarbha* Index. s. v. *śūnya* (*tā*).

[24] See *RGV* (J) i. 148.

The other two aspects on which the theory is based are (the irradiation, *spharaṇa*, of) the *dharmakāya* and the *prakṛtistha-gotra*. See *RGV* (J) 1.27–28; 148–152; *Thé-orie*, pp. 34, 275 sq., 424; *Le Traité du tathāgatagarbha*, pp. 10, 96 sq.

[25] This was already observed by Kamalaśīla, *Madhyamakāloka* T. T. fol. 159b. Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 34, 276–277; *Traité du tathāgatagarbha*, p. 99.

[26] See *MSA* chapters iii and xi; *Théorie*, pp. 179 sq.; 185 sq.

[27] See *MSABh* ix. 37.

[28] This meaning of the compound *tathāgata-garbha* can be rendered in Tibetan by means of the particle *can*, which serves *inter alia* to translate Sanskrit *bahuvrīhi* compounds; the same particle also translates the Sanskrit suffixes-*mant-/-vant-*, etc.

[29] Rather than of 'relic' (see below).

[30] Cf. for example *SP* chapter xi, which enumerates at the beginning *suvarṇa*, *rū-pya*, *vaiḍūrya*, *musāragalva*, *aśmagarbha*, *lohitamukti* and *karketana*.

[31] Haribhadra glosses (*AAĀ* ii. 18, p. 218): *tathāgatadhātumadhyān* 'having in their core the Tathāgata-relic'.

For the idea compare e.g. the word *aṅgārastūpa* (in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, ed. E. Waldschmidt, § 51.20) and the phrase *stūpaḥ . . . aṅgāragarbhaḥ 'stūpa* con-taining carbonised [relics]' (in E. Waldschmidt, *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Tur-fanfunden* I, 931bAd). See also *Samādhirājasūtra* 33, p. 456.6; *Divyāvadāna* 26, p. 369.1.

[32] On these two senses of the compound *tathāgata-garbha* see *Théorie*, p. 507 sq.;

Le Traité du tathāgatagvarbha p. 52 sq.

[33] Cf. *aṅgārastūpa* mentioned above, note 31.

[34] See *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, iv. 73 (but cf. iv. 121); compare e.g. *Mahāvaṃsa* xvii. 65. Cf. A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule* (Paris 1955), pp. 154 (Mūlasarvāstivādins), 192 (Dharmaguptakas) (the thesis that this cult of the *stūpa* can produce good fruit was combatted by other schools such as the Caitīyas, Pūrvaśailas, the later Mahīśāsakas, and the Aparaśailas); E. Lamotte, *Histoire du boudhisme indien* (Louvain 1958), p. 702–703.

[35] *Abhidharmakośa* iv. 107.

[36] *Madhyamakāloka* T. T. fol. 159b, 267a, 271b–272b.

[37] The four *nirvedhabhāgīyas* are *ūṣman* (*ūṣmagata*), *mūrdhan*, *kṣānti*, and *laukikāgradharma*, all of them being assigned to the *prayogamārga*. Together with the following *darśanamārga* and *bhāvanāmārga* they constitute the six *adhigamadharmas* (see below, p. 297). See *AA* i. 5; 25 sq.; 37; *Abhidharmakośa* vi. 17 sq.

[38] This point has already been mentioned by Ārya Vimuktisena, who speaks of a didactic sequence (*pratipādanānupūrvī*) as distinct from the actual sequence (*arthānupūrvī*); see his *Vṛtti* (ed. C. Pensa p. 78). Similarly, Haribhadra speaks of a sequence founded on the stages of understanding (*adhigamānukrama*) (*AAĀ* i. 37–38, p. 77).

On the *gotra* as a *motivating* cause, as distinct from a productive cause, cf. *Théorie*, pp. 119 note, 131, with *WZKS* 12–13 (1968), p. 316. See also below, note 73; p. 308.

[39] That is, the sequence adopted in the *AA* indicates that it is the effected or caused (*abhisaṃskṛta*) *gotra* that is in question, rather than the fundamental and universal *prakṛtistha-gotra*. (The second *gotra* would then correspond to the *samudānīta* or *paripuṣṭagotra*, which may be considered as a *productive* cause since it is conditioned [*saṃskṛta*].) This alternative explanation of the sequence adopted in the *AA* has not been mentioned by the Vimuktisenas and Haribhadra; but Ārya Vimuktisena's *Vṛtti* (p. 76–77) does mention a *gotra* that is *pratyayasamudānīta* and functions as a cause (*kāraṇa*). See below, p. 300

[40] See *MSA* iii. 2. 300.

[41] On this see *Théorie*, p. 141 note 5.

[42] *AA* i. 39ab: *dharmadhātor asambhedād gotrabhedo na yujyate |*

[43] The Sanskrit text of this passage is quoted by Ārya Vimuktisena (p. 77): *yadi mañjuśrīr eko dharmadhātur ekā tathatā ekā bhūtakoṭis tat kathaṃ bhājanam abhājanam vā prajñāpayatha* (?). Here *pra-jñāpay* has been translated into Tibetan by *brtags*; but in Abhayākaragupta's *Munimatālaṃkāra* it has been written more correctly *gdags* (see below, p. 300).

[44] Cf. *WZKS* 11–12, p. 309–310; *Théorie*, p. 103.

[45] *Abhidharmakośa* vi. 57cd: *tadgotrā āditaḥ ke cit, ke cid uttāpanāgatāḥ ||*

[46] When the term *bodhisattva* is used in the sense of a spiritual principle that is no *padārtha* (see below, p. 292), rather than a (type of) person, it is written here as an italicized technical term. Cf. Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 73.

[47] Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 109, 89.

[48] Haribhadra, *'Grel pa don gsal*, T. T. fol. 105b8; *AAĀ* 1.39 (p. 77). Cf. Ārya Vimuktisena, p. 77.5.

If the *liṅga* (or *hetu*) 'logical reason' is present in all cases (as is necessarily the case with the universal *dharmadhātu*), there could be no heterologous examples (*vipakṣa*) in which it would be absent; but this lack of absence (*vyatireka*) makes it impossible to make a valid inference (*anumāna*) following the rules of logic widely accepted by the Buddhists after Dignāga.

⁴⁹ *AA* i. 5cd: *ādhāraḥ pratipatteś ca dharmadhātusvabhāvakaḥ* ||

⁵⁰ Cf. *AA* 1.39cd: *ādheyadharmabhedāt tu tadbhedaḥ parigīyate* || See also below, p. 294.

⁵¹ *Adhyardhaśatikā prajñāpāramitā* (ed. P. L. Vaidya *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha* I, p. 92). Cf. E. Conze, in *Studies of Esoteric Buddhism and Tantrism* (Koyasan University, Koyasan, 1965), pp. 101–115, and *Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts* (London, 1973), pp. 184–195, where Conze translates 'tathāgatas in embryo'.

⁵² Cf. *Théorie*, p. 209.

⁵³ *MSA* iii. 5.

⁵⁴ See also Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 76.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 77–78, and *WZKS* 12–13, p. 311 note 34. (On such etymologies see also J. Gonda, *Lingua* 5 [1955–56], p. 61 sq.)

⁵⁶ Cf. *Théorie*, p. 144.

⁵⁷ See *MSABh* iii. 4: *guṇottāraṇārthena gotraṃ veditavyaṃ guṇā uttaranty asmād udbhavantīti kṛtvā*, and the passage from the *Vṛtti* referred to above, note 55; cf. *WZKS* 12–13, p. 311 note 32.

⁵⁸ This definition of the *gotra* is adopted by Ābhidharmikas such as Yaśomitra (*Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, p. 583–584); it is mentioned also by Sthiramati (*Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* iv. 13).

⁵⁹ 'Grel pa don gsal, T. T. fol. 105b7.

⁶⁰ The four *pratipattis* comprised by the four *mārgas* (prayoga°, darśana°, bhāvanā° and viśeṣa-mārga) (*AAĀ* i. 6, 43)?

⁶¹ 'Grel pa don gsal, T. T. fol. 105b6–7. Cf. *AA* i. 5. On the trayodaśavidho bodhisattvaḥ see also *AAĀ* i. 37–38: saṃvṛtyā punaḥ pratipattidharmasyāvasthāntarabhedena dharmadhātusvabhāva eva buddhadharmādhāro bodhisattvas trayodaśavidho gotraṃ iti nirdiśyate; Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 77. And on the *dharmadhātu* as the cause of comprehension of the *āryadharmas* see *AAĀ* i. 39: yadi dharmadhātor evāryadharmādhigamāya hetutvāt tadātmako bodhisattvaḥ prakṛtistham anuttarabuddhadharmāṇāṃ gotraṃ dharmatāsaṃjñakam, tadā . . . ; *Vṛtti*, p. 76.

⁶² Here Dharmamitra correlates all thirteen aspects with the stages of the Path, and he thus develops the explanations previously given by the Vimuktisenas and Haribhadra.

⁶³ 'Grel pa don gsal, T. T. fol. 105b4–5. Cf. *AAĀ* p. 77: tato yathāśayam avatāraṇādyabhisaṃdhidvāreṇa yānatrayapratiṣṭhāpanalakṣaṇaparārthānukramasya[ādhāraḥ]. Cf. *Théorie*, p. 165–166; *Le Traité du tathāgatagarbha*, p. 83 sq.

⁶⁴ See above, p. 285.

⁶⁵ Dharmamitra thus clearly distinguishes this teaching—corresponding to that of the *tathāgatagarbha*—from that of a self (*ātman*) or *dhātu* (*khams*, not *dbyiṅs*), which he mentions first, in connexion with the *parikalpita*.

⁶⁶ 'Grel pa don gsal, fol. T. T. 106a1–2.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 140, 151, 154–155, where it is noted that this statement of the

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Śrāvaka doctrine does not correspond with what is usually regarded as their doctrine.

68 *AA* i. 39cd quoted above, note 50.

69 *'Grel pa don gsal*, T. T. fol. 106a3.

70 As just observed, *AA* i. 39cd speaks of different contained factors (*ādheyadharma*)—the various particularized *gotras* differentiated in terms of the various conditional paths—instead of the single container/support (*ādhāra*)—the unparticularized *gotra* defined in terms of the single and unique *dharmadhātu*.

71 The twenty-two *cittotpādas* are enumerated in *AAĀ* i. 19–20.

72 Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 73: *yata āha: cittotpādād ārabhya nirvedhabhāgīyeṣu darśanamārge bhāvanāmārge ca . . .*

73 *seṅ ge bzaṅ po'i ñes par 'byed pa'i cha daṅ rnams ni chos kyi dbyiṅs kyi rten no źes pa ni mi 'thad do.* The meaning of this is unclear. Haribhadra has stated that the *gotra* is the *ādhāra* of the four *nirvedhabhāgīyas* etc., and that it receives the designation of *dharmatā* because the *dharmadhātu* is the cause (*hetu*) of the comprehension of the *āryadharmas* (*AAĀ* i. 37–39). Similarly, in the *'Grel pa don gsal* (T. T. fol. 105a) also, Haribhadra speaks of the *gotra* as the support of practice etc., adding (fol. 106a) that the *dharmadhātu*, which is really without differentiation, functions as a cause for the comprehension of the *āryadharmas*.

74 *AAĀ* i. 37–39; Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 76.17–18.

75 *AA* i. 39ab (above, note 42).

76 This objection is found also e.g. in *AAĀ* i. 39.

77 *AA* i. 39cd (above, note 50).

78 Viz. the Ārya-Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha.

79 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* in the version edited by N. Dutt, p. 160; Cf. *infra*, p. 300–01.

80 *gźi'i don:padārtha.* See *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* i, p. 18: *tatra bodhisattva iti bhagavan ka padārthaḥ?*

81 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* i, p. 18: *apadārthaḥ subhūte bodhisattvapadārthaḥ.* Cf. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, version edited by N. Dutt, p. 160.

82 Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 73: *na tu vastubhūtaḥ padārthaḥ.*

83 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā* i, p. 18: *tat kasya hetoḥ?*

84 *byaṅ chub kyi rigs.* Cf. *AAĀ* i. 39 (p. 77) *prakṛtistham anuttarabuddhadharmāṇāṃ gotraṃ dharmatāsaṃjñakam.*

85 See *AA* i. 37. Cf. *AAĀ* p. 76: *yasmāt sarvadharmāṇāṃ vastutannimittābhiniveśābhāvena 'asaktatāyāṃ' satyām anyathādhigamānupapattyā buddhadharmādhigamāya māyāpuruṣa iva śikṣate, tasmāt kathāṃ tattvataḥ pratiṣṭhārthaḥ iti bhāvaḥ; saṃvṛtyā punaḥ pratipattidharmasyāvasthāntarabhedena dharmadhātusvabhāva eva buddhadharmādhāro bodhisattvas trayodaśavidho gotram iti nirdiśyate . . .*

86 Here and in the following extracts the notes printed in small letters in the Peking text of the Tibetan translation of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* have been placed in parentheses in the present English rendering. These notes are not found in the Sde-dge edition.

87 On the *avatāraṇābhisaṃdhi* etc. see above, p. 292.

88 *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* x (Sagāthaka) 445:
    yānavyavasthā naivāsti yānam ekaṃ vadāmy ahaṃ |

parikarṣaṇārthaṃ bālānāṃ yānabhedaṃ vadāmy aham ||
Cf. ii. 203.

[89] *Niraupamyastava* 21:
dharmadhātor asambhedād yānabhedo 'sti na prabho |
yānatritayam ākhyātaṃ tvayā sattvāvatāratataḥ ||

[90] On *tulyatva* 'equivalence' of *dharma*, *nairātmya* and *mukti* between the *yānas* as a justification for the intentional teaching of the *ekayāna* according to the Vijñā-navāda, see *MSA* xi. 53 and Bhāṣya. This objection reflects then the position of the Vijñānavāda as described by many of the doxographers. Cf. *Théorie*, pp. 187, 195.

[91] *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, chapter iii (ed. N. Dutt, p. 50). Cf. *AAĀ* ii, p. 133; *Théo-rie*, p. 194.

[92] See *AAĀ* ii, p. 133–134; *Théorie*, p. 194.

[93] *MSA* xi. 53 sq.

[94] *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* i, p. 34: *sacet te 'py anuttarāyāṃ samyaksam-bodhau cittāny utpādayeran nāhaṃ kuśalamūlasyântarāyaṃ karomi*.

[95] See above, p. 291.

[96] *ruṅ ba*; *ruṅ ba ñid* = *bhavyatā* (cf. commentary on *RGV* (J.) i. 41). On *abhavya* 'incapable (of attainment)' see *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* ii, p. 34, *AA* viii. 10, and *Bodhisatt-vabhūmi* § 1.1

[97] *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*: *sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ*. On the interpretation of this statement, in which *tathāgatagarbha* is a possessive compound meaning 'containing the *tathāgata*' (as a potentiality within), see above. p. 287–8

[98] Cf. *Théorie*, p. 152.

[99] *MSA* ix. 37:
sarveṣāṃ aviśiṣṭâpi tathatā śuddhim āgatā |
tathāgatatvaṃ tasmāc ca tadgarbhāḥ sarvadehinaḥ ||
'Thusness, although without differentiation for all, once it has attained purity is *tathāgata*-ness; all incarnated beings therefore have it as their embryonic essence [i.e. contain it]'. The notion of the *tathāgatagarbha* in question here is founded on the interpretation that takes the compound as a *bahuvrīhi*; see above.

[100] *'phags pa byams pa kyaṅ theg pa chen po rgyud bla mar* ('i 'grel par | mdo sde rgyan gyi byaṅ chub kyi skabs su gsuṅs par draṅs pa) | thams cad la ni khyad med kyaṅ || de bźin ñid ni (glo bur gyi dri ma) dag gyur pa || de bźin gśegs ñid (yin pa) de yi phyir || 'gro kun (de bźin gśegs pa) de'i sñiṅ po can || źes pa la sogs pas (kun saṅs rgyas kyi sñiṅ sems can du bstan pas) so || (gźun de'i) de bźin gśegs pa'i sgras kyaṅ chos kyi dbyiṅs gaṅ zag daṅ chos kyi bdag med pa'i mtshan ñid can raṅ bźin gyis 'od gsal ba brjod par bźed pa ñid kyi phyir ro ||

[101] Compare the explanation of the different senses of *yāna* in *MSABh* ix. 53.

[102] *skal pa* = *bhavya*.

[103] On *advayajñāna* and the Prajñāpāramitā, see also Dignāga's *Prajñāpāramitā-piṇḍārtha*.

[104] *Pramāṇavārttika* ii. 253:
yā ca naḥ pratyayotpattiḥ sā nairātmyadṛgāśrayā |
muktis tu śūnyatādṛṣṭeḥ, tadarthā śeṣabhāvanā ||
(Cf. the quotation of this verse in Guṇaratna's commentary on Haribhadrasūri's *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* 11.) The four aspects of the *duḥkhasatya* are *anitya*, *duḥkha*,

anātman and *śūnya.* (cf. *Abhidharmakośa* vi. 17, vii.12).

105 See above, note 38, and note 73.

106 See *Bodhisattvabhūmi* 1.1; *Théorie*, p. 87–88.

107 On the *dhātu* see also *Munimatālaṃkāra*, fol. 277b, where it is defined as an *upādānakāraṇa* (cf. *supra*, notes 38 and 39).

108 See *MSA* iii. 7, and Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 76.

109 *MSA* iii. 9. Cf. Sthiramati, *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* i. 15 (*Théorie*, p. 97); *RGV*-commentary i. 2.

110 That is, in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*. On the use of *bdag ñid = ātman* in the *tathāgatagarbha* texts see the indices in *La Théorie du tathāgatagarbha* and *Traité* under *ātman*.

111 See above, note 108.

112 (*chos ñid yod tsam gyis saṅs rgyas mi 'grub pa*) *de ñid kyi phyir khyad par du 'phags pa* (*ñes pa bźi daṅ bral źiṅ sad* [?] *pa*) *ni rigs* (*yin*) *te*. The syntactic construction here is somewhat unclear, the usual expression in Sanskrit being *āryagotra*.

113 The (*bodhisattva*)*gotra* is what is referred to by the word '*bodhisattva*'. See Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 73: *ṣaṇṇāṃ pāramitānāṃ dharmatālakṣaṇo viśeṣo gotraṃ bodhisattvapravṛttinimittaṃ na tu vastubhūtaḥ padārthaḥ iti vedayati.* Cf. *AAĀ* 1.35, p. 71.

114 See above, note 71.

115 *AA* i. 43.

116 Viz. *ūṣman, kṣānti, mūrdhan, laukikāgradharma* (all on the *prayogamārga*), *darśanamārga,* and *bhāvanāmārga.*

117 Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 73. 6–8.

118 Ratnākaraśānti, *Śuddhimatī,* T. T. fol. 116b5.

119 *AAĀ* i. 37, p. 76: *tayor vipakṣapratipakṣayor nirodhotpādayuktavikalpāpagamasya* [*ādhāraḥ*]. See also Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 75. Cf *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, Dutt, p. 163.

120 *AAĀ* i. 39, p. 77 (from which the text of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* differs slightly).

121 See above, note 43.

122 Ārya Vimuktisena, *Vṛtti*, p. 77: *satyam evam etat . . .*

123 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, version edited by Dutt, p. 160; cf. *supra*, p. 294.

124 *gaṅ 'du byed cuṅ zad kyaṅ med pa de ni 'dus ma byas pa ste de ni 'phags pa rnams kyi rigs su mthuns la rigs de ni nam mkha' daṅ mñam pa ñid kyis khyad par med pa'o// rigs de ni chos thams cad ro gcig pa ñid kyis rtag pa ste/ rigs de ni thams cad kyi tshe chos ñid yin pas śes pa la sogs pa'o//* The Sanskrit text quoted in Pensa's ed. of Ārya Vimuktisena's *Vṛtti* (p. 77) differs slightly: *yatra na kecit saṃskārās tad asaṃskṛtaṃ/ yad asaṃskṛtaṃ tad āryāṇāṃ gotraṃ/ samaṃ tad gotram ākāśasamatayā/ nirviśeṣaṃ tad gotraṃ dharmaikarasatayā/ nityaṃ tad gotraṃ sadā dharmatathatayā/* (This corresponds to what we find in *Kāśyapaparivarta* §§102–104; cf. the commentary on the *RGV* (J) 1. 86). But the Tibetan translation of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* agrees with the Tibetan translation of Vimuktisena's *Vṛtti* (T. T. fol. 68b) except at the end: *. . . rigs de ni thams cad kyi tshe chos kyi de bźin ñid yin pas chos kyi ro gcig tu gyur pa ñid kyis rtag pa'o//* In these versions of the passage nothing corresponds to *śes pa* at the end of the *Munimatālaṃkāra* passage.

125 See above, note 55 and note 57.

[126] Ratnākaraśānti, *Śuddhimatī*, T. T. fol. 114b1–2: *go źes bya ba ni 'gro ba daṅ gnas pa la 'jug pa'o |¦ 'dir ni gnas pa na 'jug pa ste | rten pa źes bya ba'i don te | dper na nam mkha' ni thams cad du 'gro ba źes bya ba lta bu'o |¦ mi g-yo ba'i tshul gyis 'dzin pas skyob pa ste | des na rigs ni rten no |¦*

[127] See *Marmakaumudī*, T. T. fol. 57a7–8.

[128] See above, pp. 293–2

[129] By this annotator's reference to *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 70 in the present context the *prakṛtistha-gotra*, whose nature is *dharmadhātu* and which is acquired in virtue of *dharmatā*, is evidently assimilated with *śūnyatā*. This assimilation is of importance also for the theory of the *tathāgatagarbha* since the latter has been connected with this *gotra*.

That the pronouns *yasya . . . tasya* in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 70, as well as in the parallel *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* xxiv. 14, refer not to a thing but to a person is shown both by the context and the commentaries.

[130] Cf. *Marmakaumudī*, T. T. fol. 57a8: *nam mkha' ci yaṅ med pa la zla ba daṅ ñi ma'i 'od zer gyis mun pa zad par byed pa.* (Compare the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* on the *pratipakṣādhāra*, the *prajñākaruṇādhāra* and the *asādhāraṇaguṇādhāra*, e.g. in Dutt's edition of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, p. 163–164.)

Like the empty sky, then, the *dharmadhātu* is without own being, yet it serves as a 'support' for certain things.

[131] This work is quoted in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*; cf. Haribhadra's *AĀĀ* ii, p. 132.

[132] Cf. *Le Traité du tathāgatagarbha*, p. 142 sq.

[133] *Marmakaumudī*, T. T. fol. 56b–57a (above, p. 294).

[134] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 186b (above, p. 296). See also Dharmamitra, *Prasphuṭapadā* quoted above (pp. 290, 292).

[135] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 188b (above, p. 297)

[136] *Munimatālaṃkāra*, T. T. fol. 186b1 (above, p. 296).

[137] The philosophical links mentioned here by Abhayākaragupta between the *tathāgatagarbha* theory and *nairātmya, niḥsvabhāvatā* and *śūnyatā* clearly establish that this idea is not simply a Tibetan development characteristic especially of the Dge·lugs·pas (as has seemingly been argued by L. Schmithausen, *WZKS* 17 [1973], p. 132 sq.; the question whether such an interpretation is 'schlüssig', raised by Schmithausen [p. 133], is not at issue here, only whether such interpretations were actually maintained by important Indian Buddhist masters). The connexion referred to with the concept of the luminosity of mind is also remarkable (Schmithausen has reservations also on this subject expressed *op. cit.*, p. 140–141); no doubt the luminosity notion of the Āgama/Nikāyas (see *Aṅguttaranikāya* I, p. 10) was not in its origins connected with the *śūnyatā* theory (cf. also J. W. de Jong, *AM* 1971, p. 110: 'The *cittam acittam* of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* is not identical with the *śūnyatā* of the Madhyamaka'), but that the theories did in fact converge in the development of Indian Buddhist thought is shown also by this section of the *Munimatālaṃkāra*. Concerned as he evidently was in his article cited above with the 'original' alone, Schmithausen did not take into account the fact that the interpretations offered by the Dge·lugs·pa school are usually based on an Indian source and that, in any case, the developments of the *tathāgatagarbha* and *gotra* doctrines in the

Indo-Tibetan exegetical traditions can be of as much interest to historians of Buddhism as 'original' doctrines. Even if it may be felt that these later interpretations are not 'schlüssig', still what must concern the historian of these traditions is not their 'conclusiveness' but their existence and the question of the influence they had in the history of Buddhist thought in India and elsewhere.

[138] Some of these problems have also occupied an important place in the history of Buddhism elsewhere in Central Asia (e.g. Khotan) and in China, where the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school is not known to have been an influential school, so that the significance attached to them must be assumed to have other origins too. (The Chinese documents on the subject in particular are now in urgent need of systematic study.)

Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahāyāna

Stephan Beyer

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity of honoring Edward Conze with a few modest notes that may highlight a feature of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature that seems to have received little attention. It was Edward Conze, of course, who first introduced the English-speaking world to the tale of Sadāprarudita—"Ever-Weeping"—and his quest for the Law: this article is a brief prolegomenon to research on the ways in which this quest relates to contemporaneous literary themes in both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Lewis Lancaster ("The Story of a Buddhist Hero" *The Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 10 (1974) 83–89) has pointed out that the tale as found in the Sanskrit text corresponds to the Chinese translation by Mokṣala in 291 AD, but that an earlier and expanded version is available in the Lokakṣema translation of 179 AD. The episodic structure of Sadāprarudita A is: (1) Sadāprarudita has two dreams that tell him to seek the Law, but his initial quest is unsuccessful. (2) He has a vision of a deity who gives him instructions, but he is overcome with doubt. (3) He has a vision of a magically created Buddha who tells him of the land of Gandhavatī and of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata who lives there. (4) He enters into a *samādhi* wherein he sees the Buddhas of the ten directions. (5) He overcomes tremendous obstacles and makes great sacrifices on his quest for Gandhavatī. (6) He reaches the realm of Dharmodgata, hears the Law, and enters once more the *samādhi* of episode (4). Sadāprarudita B has the same structure but begins at episode (2) with a voice from the sky, and episode (6) consists in his asking Dharmodgata about the metaphysical implications of the *samādhi*: "Where do the Buddhas go?"

Both tales are temptingly allegorical, and two questions present themselves: what is the allegory? and how can we account for the change in the two versions? We might begin by seeking to understand the nature of the land of Gandhavatī. Its description in the tale is strikingly like the standard descriptions of Buddhafields—"Pure Lands"—that we find elsewhere in Buddhist literature, and Dharmodgata is a Bo-

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dhisattva who has "purified" his field—that is, who has "attained to mastery over magical creations" on the very highest Bodhisattva stages. Sadāprarudita has an escalating series of revelations—dreams (in the earlier version), a vision of a deity or a voice from the sky, a vision of a Buddha, and finally a *samādhi* vision of all the Buddhas—all of which have in common that they are gratuitous, unsought, given: we may group episodes (1–4) together as: (I) Sadāprarudita has an involuntary visionary revelation. The remaining episodes can then be described as: (II) He goes on an arduous quest for a magical Buddhafield. (III) He reaches the Buddhafield and hears the Law. Episodes (II) and (III) mean that he *does for himself* what he got for free in episode (I): he reaches a shining, revelatory, and visionary world. Version A closes the circle explicitly by having Sadāprarudita enter the *samādhi* once again: in version B the reference is implicit and presupposed in the metaphysical question.

This abstract tripartite structure can be found elsewhere in early Mahāyāna literature. In chapter nineteen of the SP, Sadāparibhūta hears a voice from the sky at the moment of his death: the voice expounds the **Lotus Sūtra**, whereupon Sadāparibhūta becomes perfect in all his faculties and vows to live for billions of years preaching the text. Then he worships billions of Buddhas named Candraprabhāsvararāja, billions of Buddhas named Dundubhisvararāja, billions of Buddhas named Meghasvararāja: he honors, respects, esteems, worships, venerates, and reveres billions and billions of Buddhas. The Blessed One concludes the narrative by saying that he himself was once Sadāparibhūta, now attained to complete and perfect enlightenment. Here we may characterize the episodes as: (I) Sadāparibhūta has an involuntary visionary revelation. (II) He worships billions of Buddhas. (III) He gains complete enlightenment and becomes our present Buddha.

Similar tripartite episodic structures can be found in Pure Land materials. In the **Amitāyurdhyānasūtra**, Queen Vaidehī—imprisoned by her patricidal son—is granted a vision of all the pure Buddhafields of the ten directions. She asks the Buddha how to meditate so as to gain a vision of the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī, and she is told: "It is by the power of the Buddha that you gain a vision of that Pure Land, as clearly as you see the reflection of your face in a bright mirror . . . You are still an ordinary person, and your concentration is weak: you have not gained the divine eye, and you cannot see what is far off: but all the Buddhas have skill in means, that you may be granted the vision."

The Queen will not accept that such visions are the product of an uncontrollable grace, and she persists: "It is by the power of the Buddha that people such as I can see that land: but after the Buddha has passed away, all beings will be evil and without virtue, suffering the five sufferings: how can they see this Land of Happiness?" Whereupon the remainder of the text consists in detailed and explicit instructions upon the conscious visualization of the Buddha Amitāyus, his retinue, and his Buddhafield: finally the Queen gains complete and perfect enlightenment. Here the episodes can be characterized as: (I) Queen Vaidehī has an involuntary visionary revelation. (II) She is taught how to visualize the Buddha Amitāyus and his Buddhafield. (III) She gains complete enlightenment.

A footnote to the tale: at the end the Buddha predicts that all the Queen's 500 maidservants will be born in Sukhāvatī and be able to attain "the *samādhi* of the presence of many Buddhas." This *samādhi* and its analogues form a recurring motif in the early visionary literature: it is the *samādhi* experienced and sought by Sadāprarudita, structurally equivalent in these tales to complete enlightenment; it constitutes the central theme of the important early Mahāyāna *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*; in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* it is the last *samādhi* named on the tenth stage before the Bodhisattva enters the initiation into omniscient knowledge.

We might add also the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara in the larger *Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra*: through the grace of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja he learns the excellences of all the Buddhafields of billions of Buddhas: he vows to combine these into a single realm, and practices the Bodhisattva path for billions and billions of years: he becomes the Buddha Amitābha and creates the Buddhafield Sukhāvatī. Here—as also in many places in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*—the Bodhisattva path seems to be an arduous quest for visonary knowledge and power. According to Kamalaśīla in the first *Bhāvanākrama*, the criterion of ethical and contemplative success is the ability "to manifest magical creations, heavens and retinues, and to train all beings in the bliss of the perfect Law": it is only on the tenth and final Bodhisattva stage that the Bodhisattva "possesses the special knowledge needed to train beings through magical creations." Thus the Bodhisattva Dharmākara and the Queen Vaidehī are both trained in the same art of visualization and magical creation: both learn to *do for themselves* what was given them in the first episode.

These examples are suggestive rather than exhaustive. We might point

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to the quest of Sudhana in the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* for the Tower of Maitreya—called the tower "within which are ornaments in dazzling array" like the shining gems visualized by Queen Vaidehī—as a greatly expanded version of the same outline; short tales such as the story of Sudatta in chapter nine of the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra* manifest the same basic themes. We may summarize the tales considered here as follows:

	Sadāpra-rudita A	Sadāpra-rudita B	Sadāpa-ribhūta	Vaidehī	Dharmā-kara
I	dreams vision of deity vision of Buddha	voice from the sky vision of Buddha	voice from the sky		teaching by Buddha
	samādhi of all Buddhas	samādhi of all Buddhas		vision of all Pure Lands	
II	arduous quest through the world		worship of billion of Buddhas	training in visualization	Bodhisattva path and vows
III	samādhi of all Buddhas	questioning Dharmodgata	Buddhahood	enlightenment	Buddhahood

Scholars have drawn some attention to the place of dreams, visions, and revelations in early Mahāyāna, notably Lewis Lancaster in his still unpublished "Descriptions of Non-ordinary Reality in Buddhist Samādhis" and Paul Demiéville in his sections on Maitreya in "La Yogācārabhūmi de Saṅgharakṣa" *BEFEO* 44 (1954) 376–395: and although I feel that this aspect of early Mahāyāna is still widely undervalued— especially relative to its more philosophical component—my intention in the remainder of this note is to explore briefly the correlations suggested by part (II) of the episodic structure: the quest itself as a search for the control—for the conscious return—of the originally uncontrolled and given visionary revelation.

We may note first that the theme of the vision quest is not restricted to Buddhist literature: indeed, one of the most remarkable and influential structural fragments of the theme constitutes the central theophany of chapter eleven of the ***Bhagavadgītā***, just as the practice of *bhakti* constitutes the core of its teaching.

What is *bhakti*? Scholars have found for it amazing etymologies, and all the practices that were yet to come have been read into its meaning. Let us restrict our attention to its technical usage in the ***Bhagavadgītā*** itself. In the first verse of chapter seven we read: "Attach your mind to me: practice *yoga* and base yourself on me: and you will know me fully . . ." It is clear that *yoga* is integral to the practice of *bhakti*: it is not the rather vague emotional dependence and devotionalism denoted by the term in current usage, but rather a specific contemplative activity, the iconographic visualization of the god—precisely the meditative technique that forms the episodic core of the Buddhist vision quest.

We may recall that Sadāparibhūta receives his initial revelation of the Lotus Sūtra at the moment of his death: Queen Vaidehī, too, is granted her vision immediately after her son takes up a sharp sword to slay her, dissuaded at last only by the intervention of his ministers: in the fifth verse of chapter eight of the ***Bhagavadgītā*** Kṛṣṇa begins a discussion of the thoughts one should think at the moment of death. These final thoughts are of the utmost consequence: the mental vision of the moment of death determines the destiny of the soul. And Kṛṣṇa says: "Whoever at the time of death, when he casts aside his body, bears me in mind (*smaran*) and departs, comes to my mode of being: there is no doubt of this." Compare this with verse 23 in chapter seven: "The one who sacrifices to the gods will go to the gods: but the one who is my *bhakta* will go to me." These two verses indicate an equivalence of *bhakti* and *smṛti*. Chapter eight continues:

> Whatever state one may bear in mind (*smaran*) when he finally casts aside his body is the state to which one goes, for that state makes one grow into itself: so ever bear me in mind (*anusmaran*) as you fight, for if you fix your mind and *buddhi* on me you will come to me: there is no doubt of this. Let the thoughts be controlled (*yukta*) by *yoga* and by effort, let them not stray after anything else: one who meditates on the supreme person goes to him. The ancient seer, the ruler, smaller than the small, supporter of all, inconceivable in form, sun-

colored beyond the darkness: thus let one bear him in mind (*anusmared*).

The next verse uses the term *bhakti* specifically: "With his mind unmoving as he departs, controlled (*yukta*) by *bhakti* and by the power of *yoga*, properly forcing his breath between his eyebrows, he will approach the divine supreme person." And—just as the *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra* enjoins the repetition of the Buddha's name—the practice of visualization is here explicitly connected to the recitation of the sacred word:

> Let him close all the gates of his body, confine his mind within his heart, fix his breath within his head, and establish himself in concentration by *yoga*: let him utter OṂ, *brahman* in one syllable, bearing me in mind (*anusmaran*): then, when he casts aside his body and departs, he will reach the highest goal. How easily am I reached by him who bears me in mind (*smarati*), thinking of nothing else—a *yogin* who is ever controlled (*yukta*).

For the *Bhagavadgītā*, *smṛti* or *anusmṛti* is the *bhakti* of the moment of death: it is a visualization performed in imitation of the primordial revelation, a vast theophany originally granted solely by the grace of the deity, but now—through the intercession of a holy person of the past—made available to all though contemplative practice. In chapter eleven of the *Bhagavadgītā*, Arjuna finally—in an overwhelming visionary experience—sees Kṛṣṇa as he really is: the cosmic Viṣṇu, with all the creatures of the world being devoured and spewn forth from the thousand heads with their thousand mouths, with his fiery light filling the whole universe and scorching it with fierce radiance. We may note the parallel of this vision of blazing light with the analogous visions of shining light and dazzling gems in the Buddhist texts, and we may say: (1) Arjuna has an involuntary visionary revelation.

When he has returned to his human form, Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna (verses 47 and 48) that it was only through divine grace that he could see this supreme and luminous form, which can be seen in the world of men by no one else: and then he continues (verses 53 and 54): "Not by the Vedas and not by *tapas*, not by charity and not by sacrifice can I be seen in such a form as you have seen me: but by *bhakti* alone can I be known and seen in such a form, as I really am, and entered into." This is strikingly reminiscent of the *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra*, where also the revealer of

the vision initially asserts the primacy of grace, and then relents and teaches a visionary contemplative technique. We may characterize this episode as: (II) Arjuna is taught the doctrine of *bhakti*.

Here the discussion continues into chapter twelve, where in the second verse—in response to a question by Arjuna—Kṛṣṇa eulogizes the practitioner who follows his teachings, as opposed to the follower of Upaniṣadic meditation: "The one I consider most controlled (*yuktatama*) is the one who fixes his mind on me and meditates (*upāsate*) on me, ever controlled, possessed of the highest faith." The expression *yuktatama* links this verse to verse 47 of chapter six: "The most controlled of all *yogins* is the one who does *bhakti* (*bhājata*) on me, his inmost self absorbed in me, possessed of faith."

Bhakti, then, is Kṛṣṇa's own contemplative technique or form of *upāsanā* that stands over against Upaniṣadic *upāsanā*: Rāmānuja, in the introduction to his commentary on chapter seven of the ***Bhagavadgītā***, says that only the *upāsanā* that has the form of *bhakti* can be a means for attaining the supreme being. This kind of *upāsanā* he defines in his commentary on ***Brahmasūtra*** 1.1.1 as "steady *anusmṛti*": he speaks of meditation as "a continuity of unwavering *smṛti*, uninterrupted like a flow of oil," and he explicitly defines this "bearing in mind" as visualization: "This *smṛti* takes the form of vision (*smṛtir darśanarūpā*), and it possesses the character of immediate perception of an object (*pratyakṣatā*) . . . *Smṛti* takes the form of being 'right before the eyes' (*sākṣātkārarūpā smṛti*)." Again, on ***Brahmasūtra*** 3.4.26 he says: ". . . Terms such as meditation or *upāsanā* refer to an awareness which takes the form of *smṛti* as clear as immediate perception: by constant practice this becomes ever more perfect, until—properly continued to the time of death—it secures liberation . . ."

On the second verse of chapter nine of the ***Bhagavadgītā***, which speaks of "the supreme knowledge known by direct exerience," Rāmānuja says: "The object of this knowledge can be immediately perceived. . . The meaning is: 'When one meditates upon me by *upāsanā* in the form of *bhakti*, then I become the object of the meditator's immediate perception.' " And on verse 65 of chapter eighteen he says: "*Upāsana* takes the form of immediate perception: it is steady *anusmṛti*: it is inexpressibly precious: it is what is here enjoined in the text, 'Fix your mind on me.' "

We do not have to look far to find Buddhist texts parallel to the ***Bhagavadgītā***: the meditation manuals produced in Kashmir and Inner

Asia in the first centuries AD all agree in calling iconographic visualization *anusmṛti*. Erik Zürcher (*The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959) 219–229) has demonstrated the profound effect such visualizations had on early Chinese Buddhism, especially through Hui-yüan and his circle: we may quote his translation of the biography of one such contemplative:

> When he had spent just a year concentrating his thought and sitting in *dhyāna*, he saw in *samādhi* the Buddha. Whenever he met an icon on his way, the Buddha would manifest himself in the air, his halo illuminating heaven and earth which all assumed a golden color, and again (he would see himself) wearing a *kāṣāya* and bathing in the jewel pond (of Sukhāvatī) . . .

The second chapter of the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra* gives a description of the contemplative technique for inducing such a *samādhi* of the presence of the Buddhas: the practitioner—who is without impurity in conduct—bears the Buddha Amitābha one-point-edly in mind, for one day and night, or for seven days and nights, alone in a solitary place. The Buddha appears before the practitioner like an image in a dream and preaches the Law: the practitioner should ask: "What must I do to be reborn in the land of the Buddha Amitābha?" And the visionary Buddha replies: "He who wishes to be born in my Buddhafield must think on me repeatedly and uninterruptedly: and thus he comes to be born in my land" (compare *Bhagavadgītā* 8.23 and Rāmānuja ad *Brahmasūtra* 4.1.1: "To meditate is to think: but to think in the form of continuous *smṛti* rather than ordinary *smṛti*. . ."). The text continues:

> A Bodhisattva uses this *anusmṛti* of the Buddha so that he may be reborn in the land of Amitābha. He must think on the body of the Buddha with its thirty-two signs, endowed with luster and brilliance . . . preaching the Law to the community of monks . . . A Bodhisattva who seeks to hear the Buddha in his very presence must thus think on him, and he who seeks to see the Buddha must think on him. . . This is the way a Bodhisattva sees the numberless pure Buddhas of the ten directions . . .

There is evidence, too, that this Buddhist *anusmṛti* became a prom-

inent contemplative technique not only in the Pure Land texts but throughout the northwest of India, and precisely at the time that Hindu *bhakti* was given such a central role in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is typical of Kashmir meditation manuals that ancillary contemplative techniques are set forth under five personality rubrics, rather than under three as is typical of southeastern manuals such as the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa (see, for example, Alex Wayman, ed. *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961) 86): scholars have already noted the process by which *buddhānusmṛti* becomes an increasingly regular member of the list, displacing such items as *dhātuprabheda* "analysis of elements" (see Paul Demiéville, "La *Yogācārabhūmi* . . ." 356–362, and D. Seyfort Ruegg, "On a Yoga Treatise from Qïzïl" *JAOS* 87 (1967) 159–161). I would emphasize, however, that this change is not so much a matter of Mahāyāna influencing Hīnayāna as it is a wave of visionary theism sweeping over the whole of northern India, influencing Hindu contemplatives as well as the *yoga* masters of Kashmir.

A short meditation manual, claiming—perhaps spuriously—Kumārajīva as its translator, the *Ssu-wei liu-yao fa (Short Method of Meditation* T. 617), can serve as an example. It begins with the five optional preliminaries, including *buddhānusmṛti*:

> When you see a beautiful image that looks like a real Buddha, carefully note every sign—from the *uṣṇīṣa* and *ūrṇa* to the feet and back from the feet to the *uṣṇīṣa*—and then go to a quiet place, close your eyes, and fix your mind on the image, with no other thoughts: if another thought arises, gather your mind together and bring it back to the image. When you have thus meditated until you can see the image whenever you wish, this is to attain to *samādhi* by meditation on an image . . . Only after this will you be able to see the living body of the Buddha face-to-face . . . Watch your mind like a mother watching a child, that it does not fall into a pit or well or dangerous pathway . . .

When the practitioner is able to see the image perfectly formed, he may proceed to visualize the living body of the Buddha, sitting under the tree of enlightenment with shining radiance, or preaching the Law in the Deer Park, or blazing with glory upon Mt. Gṛdhrakuṭa. Or further:

> Sit facing the bright and shining east, without mountains or rivers or

rocks, seeing only a Buddha sitting crosslegged, his hands raised, preaching the Law. With the eye of your mind contemplate his brilliance: fix your mind on the Buddha, with no other object: if your mind finds another object, gather it together and bring it back. When you can see this, increase the number of Buddhas to ten, then to a hundred, then to a thousand, then to innumerable Buddhas . . . When you can see this with the eye of your mind, turn your body to the southeast and contemplate as above . . .

The meditation continues in the ten directions, until the practitioner enters the *samādhi* of the Buddhas of the ten directions. Not only does this have obvious resemblances to the contemplative technique set forth for example in the ***Amitāyurdhyānasūtra***, but also the resultant *samādhi* is the same as that Sadāprarudita enters at the beginning and at the end of his vision quest.

Furthermore, Kumārajīva closes his meditation manual with a *samādhi* of the *SP*. We may note in passing the striking resemblance in diction and imagery between the *SP*. and the ***Bhagavadgītā***: we might point out the "father of the world" passages (*SP* 7.31 and 15.21–23: *BG* 9.17 and 11.43), the "unmanifest savior" theme (*SP* 15.6–10: *BG* 4.6–8), the theophonic symbolism of the blazing stretched-out tongue (*SP* 20, beginning of prose section: *BG* 11.30), the motif of needing to offer but a single flower (*SP* 2.77–95: *BG* 9.26) and of the Lord's equanimity toward all beings (*SP* 5, parable of the rain: *BG* 9.29). We may note also that the *SP*. is filled with dreams and visions: the definition of a *ṛṣi* includes his dreams and visions (13.60–72); a vision of the Buddha is a test of true belief (16, prose *ad* 36); the Buddhafield of the present Buddha—filled with hills of gems and palaces and blossoming trees —is here and now for those with the visionary eye to see it: and above all, of course, is the great theophany of Prabhūtaratna and his *stūpa* in chapter eleven, which Kumārajīva makes the central theme of his meditation:

For twenty-one days onepointedly and zealously bear in mind the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*: think of Śākyamuni Buddha upon Mt. Gṛdhrakuṭa, sitting with Prabhūtaratna Buddha within the seven-jeweled *stūpa*. Magically created Buddhas fill all the worlds of beings in the ten directions: each Buddha is attended by one Bodhisattva with but one more life, as Śākyamuni Buddha is attended by Maitreya. All the

Buddhas show their magical powers: their light spreads through innumerable lands: wishing to manifest the True Law, the sound of their voices fills all the worlds in the ten directions. They preach the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*: "Let all the beings of the ten directions and the three times, whether great or small, only once cry out *namo buddhāya*, and all will become Buddhas". . . If you thus practice meditation, attachment to the five senses will pass away, the five obstacles will disappear, and the five faculties will increase until you attain meditative *samādhi*: abiding therein, you will love the Buddha deeply . . .

(I must acknowledge the help given me in translating this text by an unpublished draft translation by my late teacher Richard H. Robinson.)

We have come some distance from our original tale. We may perhaps picture the great wave of visionary theism of the early centuries AD having three major components: the technique of visualization, the sense of devotion, and a metaphysical need to explain the soteriological potential of the new contemplative technique. In both the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *SP.* the Lord as vision is the Lord as a present and personal spiritual reality, set over against the meditator: the only appropriate response to this overwhelming encounter is worship, and Sadāparibhūta's path to enlightenment becomes the worship of billions of Buddhas. Vision and worship here go together: to see in awe is to worship, and to worship is to hope for vision. It is in worship that there is the ultimate coming-together of will and grace: it is in worship that the meditator *sees* but the deity *reveals*.

There is no doubt that this combination was an extraordinarily productive one for Hinduism, for it could be combined with an essentially personalist metaphysics, and grow with all the luxuriance of later Hindu mythology, sexual cosmogony, and the emotional fervor of *prapatti*, self-abandonment to the uncontrollable grace of the Lord. It was, I believe, a failure in Buddhism, for the uncompromising Buddhist antipersonalism left the *SP.* with no natural metaphysical foundation: the text remained an extremely powerful visionary testament, more or less abandoned in the later Indo-Tibetan tradition but tempting the awed scholars of East Asia to provide the metaphysical orphan with an appropriately grandiose home—a sister text, in fact, to that other great and homeless vision, the *Avataṃsakasūtra*.

The wave of visionary theism left its lasting mark on Buddhism as a

technique: it is striking how—compared to the *Bhagavadgītā*—the Pure Land texts manage to divorce visualization from devotion: the saving Lord remains impersonal and distant, a power to be tapped by vision and recitation, in a cool and dazzling ecstacy rather than in a genuine encounter of the human with a divine other. Thus the path of Vaidehī and of Dharmākara is a path of training and technical mastery, a progression of visionary and magical skills very much like that of the later Tantric practitioner, and to the same end of utilizing soteriological force through contemplative manipulation.

The path of Sadāprarudita is different. In the Prajñāpāramitā texts, the Śūnyavādin sūtras, and the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* we find the possibility of vision combined with a peculiarly Buddhist metaphysics. The metaphysics of the Prajñāpāramitā is in fact the metaphysics of the vision and the dream: a universe of glittering and quicksilver change is precisely one that can only be described as empty. The vision and the dream become the tools to dismantle the hard categories we impose upon reality, to reveal the eternal flowing possibility in which the Bodhisattva lives. The question that issues from Sadāprarudita's *samādhi*, and the question that becomes the climax of the later version, is "Where do the Buddhas of the vision go?" For Sadāprarudita, in the speculative context of the Prajñāpāramitā literature, the visionary quest has become a metaphysical one: in the later version of the tale we can see a hint of the process by which Mahāyāna philosophy seeks to free itself from its visionary roots.

Mahāyāna Literature in Sri Lanka: The Early Phase

Heinz Bechert

It is well known that Mahāyāna Buddhism had spread in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) during the early mediaeval period, and that there were several occasions when the followers of Mahāyāna were suppressed on the instigation of orthodox Theravāda monks. The term used for Mahāyāna in the historical literature of the Sinhalese was *Vetullavāda*. This is the Pāli term for Mahāyāna, the word *vetulla* being the Pāli form of *vaitulya*, a synonym of *vaipulya*, and both *vaitulya* and *vaipulya* are known from Indian Mahāyāna texts. For general information on traces of Mahāyāna influence in Ceylon I may refer here to Professor Mudiyanse's monograph[1]. A number of other authors have also written on Mahāyānism in Ceylon, but it will suffice here to mention Dr. Paranavitana's study which was the first major contribution dealing with the subject[2].

Most of the available evidence for Mahāyāna influence in ancient Ceylon is rather unspecific so that we do not know much of the particular forms of Mahāyāna which spread on the island. From the information derived from the chronicles and from other traditional sources it was concluded that the influence of Mahāyāna extended to the monks of the Abhayagirivāsa (or Dharmarucika) and of the Jetavanavāsa (or Sāgalika) sects only, whereas the Mahāvihāra school is believed never to have deviated from strict "hīnayānistic" orthodoxy. In many studies, it is claimed "that the use of Sanskrit rather than Pāli by the monks of the Abhayagiri fixed yet another distinction between them and their rivals of the Mahāvihāra" i.e. that these two sects used Sanskrit and not Pāli as the sacred language of their tradition, and this erroneous belief is reproduced even in some very recent publications on the subject[3]. I have discussed this question elsewhere[4] so that it may suffice here to lay stress upon the fact that we have ample evidence to show that the Abhayagirivāsin did use the same collection of sacred scriptures in Pāli which has been handed down to us by the orthodox tradition of the Mahāvihāravāsin with very minor variations. The Pāli Tripiṭaka formed the common heritage of all three *nikāya*s (sects) of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. There are legends in political history as well as in religious and

literary history which tenaciously persist defying all evidence to the contrary, and the belief that the Abhayagirivāsin used a Tripiṭaka in Sanskrit is one of these legends.

Another legend of this type is the belief that the monks of the Abhayagirivāsa and the Jetavanavāsa sects were mostly followers of Mahāyāna, whereas the monks of the Mahāvihāra sect are believed to have based their interpretation of the doctrine on the Theravāda tradition as introduced from India at the time of king Aśoka without being much influenced by the further development of doctrine and literature in India. It has been long since known, however, that late canonical and post-canonical Pāli literature was heavily influenced by Indian Buddhist literature and philosophy of other schools.[5] On the other hand, the available evidence clearly gives proof that though Mahāyānist tendencies were at times tolerated in the Abhayagiri and Jetavana communities, Mahāyāna was never made the official creed of these two sects.

There is, unfortunately, still much confusion on the nature of Buddhist "sects" or "schools" in spite of the enormous amount of writing that has been done on Buddhist sects. This confusion is caused by confounding different types of sects. In the first instance, a *nikāya* or sect can be described as a group or community of monks that mutually acknowledge the validity of their *upasampadā* or higher ordination and therefore can join together in the performance of *vinayakarmas*, i.e., legal acts prescribed by Vinaya or Buddhist ecclesiastical law. All members of such a so-called "Vinaya sect" recognized the authority of a particular redaction of the Vinaya texts being the laws governing their monastic life. Naturally the controversies leading to the formation of these sects did not completely stop after the final codification of the various "sectarian" recensions of the Vinaya scriptures, but turned to minor matters not clearly regulated in the texts and to disputes on the interpretation of the texts. The *nikāya*s formed in this way should be termed "sub-sects", and the three *nikāya*s in mediaeval Ceylonese Buddhism are "sub-sects" of Theravāda in this sense.

A *nikāya* did not necessarily originate from a split in the Sangha. It could also develop from the organizational consolidation of local traditions or missionary groups. However, when the period of doctrinal dissensions and controversies had begun, particular notions on the issues under discussion were accepted in the different *nikāya*s which turned only now into communities which were distinguished not only as different "Vinaya sects", but also as upholders of certain doctrines.

The *Kathāvatthu* in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* in the scriptures of Theravāda is a document of this period of doctrinal diversification and demarcation. Again, the information on these doctrinal controversies was subject to a considerable degree of schematizing. At least we can say that only a few of the sects mentioned in the context of the early doctrinal controversies succeeded in developing a consistent system of philosophy which had its impact on the progress of philosophical thought in India. Later sources usually list four schools of Buddhist thought, viz. Sarvāstivādin (or Vaibhāṣika), Sautrāntika, Śūnyavādin (or Mādhyamika) and Vijñānavādin (or Yogācāra). The first two of these are Hīnayāna schools, the other two professed Mahāyāna.

There should be no confusion of these philosophical schools with the earlier doctrinal and the early Vinaya sects. A Sarvāstivādin in the sense of the follower of the Sarvāstivāda philosophy, could well be a member of a rather different Vinaya sect, particularly of a sect which had no philosophical tradition of its own. There is a well-known Vinaya sect which adopted not only the philosophy but also the name of the Sarvāstivāda viz. the Mūlasarvāstivādin. This sect was not a sub-sect of the Sarvāstivādin but it had a Vinaya tradition of its own.

In this context we understand the influence of the philosophical tenets of the two main systems of Indian Buddhist philosophy of Hīnayāna, viz. Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika philosophy, on the development of Theravāda philosophical thought in Ceylon as represented in the writings of the great Pāli commentators. D. J. Kalupahana has proposed to conclude from the evidence he found for this influence that the Abhayagirivāsin and Jetavanavāsin had become followers of Sarvāstivādin and Sautrāntika *nikāya*s respectively.[6] This conclusion is, however, not acceptable. Orthodoxy in ancient Ceylon was not always as intolerant in dogmatical matters as it is generally supposed. The evidence for Sarvāstivāda influence on the philosophical opinions of Buddhaghosa and his contemporaries fits well with the evidence for the influence of Mūlasarvāstivāda literature on some of the narrative portions of the commentaries including details of the life-story of the Buddha. There is not the least trace that any of the three great sub-sects of Ceylon Buddhism adopted a non-Theravāda Vinaya and thus became part of Sarvāstivāda or Sautrāntika *nikāya*. On the contrary, Abhayagirivāsin and Jetavanavāsin always remained Theravāda sub-sects.[7]

The formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism was an innovation of a new kind, quite dissimilar from the formation of Buddhist sects. It was an

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event taking place not on the basis of the understanding of monastic discipline nor of doctrinal controversies of the traditional kind, but on a different level, viz. by a new definition of the goal of the religious life. Instead of attaining to personal liberation as a follower of the advice given by the Buddha, a Mahāyānist has decided to go along the path of a Bodhisattva, but a *bhikṣu* of Mahāyāna Buddhism did not at all cease to be a member of one of the *nikāya*s, because nobody could become a *bhikṣu* except by an *upasampadā* based on the Vinaya tradition of one of the *nikāya*s. When Mahāyāna developed, there originated two factions in most of the ancient Buddhist *nikāya*s or sects: a mahāyānistic and a hīnayānistic faction.[8]

Considering these general developments, it becomes quite obvious that Mahāyāna ideas could also have developed in the frame-work of Theravāda in ancient Ceylon. The Theravādin who accepted Mahāyāna could be called Mahāyāna-Sthaviravādin, a term used by Hsüan-tsang for communities of this kind in India. Since Pāli was the sacred language of the Theravādin, not Sanskrit, Mahāyāna-Sthaviras can be expected to have used Pāli for literary works of their school. I have shown elsewhere that a particular work written by Mahāyāna-Sthaviras in Ceylon was included in the Pāli canon and thus survived the destruction of Mahāyāna literature in Ceylon. This work is the *Buddhāpadāna*, the first part of the *Apadāna* of *Khuddakanikāya*. It was composed in the 1st century or in the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., before mahāyānistic tendencies were suppressed by King Vohārikatissa (215–237 A.D.). The *Buddhāpadāna* therefore, can be considered the earliest reliable source of information on particular views held by the Mahāyāna Buddhists of Ceylon. It testifies to the development of some of the ideas known from a group of Indian Mahāyāna works represented by the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and similar texts, but the *Buddhāpadāna* is clearly a work of indigenous Ceylonese origin, and not imported from India. Its unique importance is due to this fact.[9]

The earliest known reference to a Mahāyāna work brought from India to Ceylon refers to the reign of King Silākāla (522–535). From the *Mahāvaṃsa* (41.37–40) we learn that, in the 12th year of the reign of this king, a book called *Dhammadhātu* (skt. *Dharmadhātu*) was brought by a merchant from a journey to Kāsipura (Varanasi) and presented to the king. The king had it placed in a particular temple near the palace and installed a festival in honour of the book. In the *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* by Jayabāhu Dharmakīrti (ed. Don M. de Zilva Wickremasinghe, Colom-

bo 1890, p. 16) the name of the merchant is given as Pūrṇa. The Mahāvihāravāsin rejected the *Dhammadhātu* as false doctrine. The continuation
of the cult of the *Dharmadhātu* in Ceylon for a rather long period is attested by a 10th century Sinhalese copper plaque inscription reading
Dahamdā de patek ("two leafs of the *Dharmadhātu*") which was discovered near Anuradhapura.[10] The cult of the *Dharmadhātu* is also referred to in two other 10th century inscriptions.[11] We can safely assume
that *Dharmadhātu* was used as the name of a Mahāyāna work of Indian
origin which was written in Sanskrit, but all attempts to identify this
book with a particular text known to us have failed or remained pure
speculation. This must be said also of Paranavitana's opinion that *Dharmadhātu* is nothing else than the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*.[12]

 Historical sources from Ceylon refer to particular Mahāyāna works
by name only in connection with records on the later part of the mediaeval period, i.e. for the period from the 9th century onwards. From a
detailed report of the introduction of Tantric Buddhism during the
reign of king Matvalasen or Sena I (833–853) which is found in the
Nikāyasaṅgrahaya (pp. 18 f.) we learn that the *Ratnakūṭa* was brought
to Ceylon at that time along with the doctrines and a number of texts of the
Vajraparvatas i.e. of Vajrayāna. The *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* is, of course,
much later than these events, but Paranavitana's discovery of fragments
from the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, one of the texts of the *Ratnakūṭa* group,
amongst the so-called Indikaṭusāya copper plaques which he dated in
the 8th or 9th century,[13] is a most welcome confirmation of the reliability of Dharmakīrti's record.

We can, therefore, safely rely on the information that works of the
Ratnakūṭa class, though they originated in India much earlier, were
introduced in Sri Lanka not earlier than in the first half of the 9th century, and consequently we can date these copper plaques more accurately to the 9th century and not the 8th century. It now becomes rather
evident that the appearance of fragments from other Mahāyāna texts
in the Indikaṭusāya copper plaques and in the Vijayārāma copper
plaques as well as in some other inscriptions of 9th and 10th century[14]
cannot be made use of for conclusions on the nature of Mahāyāna in
Ceylon before King Sena I. These documents in all probability represent
the tradition of Mahāyāna and Tantric doctrines and practices introduced in Ceylon during the 9th century rather than earlier local traditions.
This refers also to the fragments from *Prajñāpāramitā* texts written on
some of the Indikaṭusāya copper plaques, most of which were identified

as extracts from the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* by T. Matsumoto and S. Paranavitana.[15]

There are only three Ceylonese documents in Sanskrit from the earlier period of Mahāyāna in Ceylon: the Kuccaveli Rock Inscription, the Tiriyāy Rock Inscription and the Trikāyastava Inscription of Mihintale. These three inscriptions are written not in Sinhalese script, but in a particularly Ceylonese form of the Grantha script. The Kuccaveli inscription is found near Trincomalee, and it can be dated between the 5th and 8th century according to S. Paranavitana. The inscription consists of two Sanskrit stanzas expressing the author's wish to become a Buddha without more specific details.[16] The text of the rock inscription found at Tiriyāy, a place not far from Kuccavēli, consists of a stotra in 11 Sanskrit stanzas with the story of the Girikaṇḍikacaitya which is said to have been founded by successors to the legendary merchants Trapussaka (Pāli Tapassu) and Vallika (Pāli Bhalluka). Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuvāk (i.e. Mañjuśrī) are named as residing in the *caitya*, and the inscription was dated in the 2nd half of the 7th or beginning of the 8th century for palaeographic reasons.[17] The third of these inscriptions also originated in the 7th or 8th century. Its text was identified as the *Trikāyastava* by Sylvain Lévi. The *Trikāyastava* is an Indian Mahāyāna hymn which is known from Chinese and Tibetan translations and transliterations.[18]

None of these three inscriptions enables us to establish the doctrines of Ceylonese Mahāyāna of the early phase in a more specific and detailed way. We must confess that Ceylonese sources do not in any way confirm traditions from non-Ceylonese sources that some of the masters of Mahāyāna, e.g. Āryadeva, were born in Ceylon, had studied in Ceylon or visited Ceylon. So far it seems rather impossible to separate truth and legend in this respect. Notwithstanding this rather disappointing statement, there are a number of points referring to methodology which I can propose here as a result of these observations:

The points of evidence for the spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Ceylon before the Sāsana reform carried out by Parākramabāhu I must be arranged and evaluated in the way of a truly historical and critical examination, but so far scholars have collected and almost indiscriminately used material from different periods for general descriptions of "Mahāyānism in ancient and mediaeval Ceylon". Fortunately, however, Sri Lanka has a rather reliable tradition of historiography which allows us to establish dates for important developments not only of political,

but also of cultural and religious history. In this context, we can establish three main periods of Mahāyānism in Ceylon:

A first period ends with the suppression of Vetullavāda by King Vohārikatissa (215–237 A.D.). In this first period, all communities in Ceylonese Buddhism seem to have been more open-minded towards innovations than later on. The only remaining literary work of Mahāyāna from this period is the *Buddhāpadāna.*

The action of King Vohārikatissa against the spread of new doctrines was instigated by the monks of the Mahāvihāra. From this time onwards, the Mahāvihāra school does not seem to have allowed the spread of Mahāyāna doctrines in its communities. The other two sects generally remained more open-minded towards these innovations, but due to the changing opinions of the rulers, periods of greater influence of Mahāyāna were succeeded by periods of rather total suppression. Unfortunately, the evidence as to the particular nature of Mahāyāna doctrines known in Ceylon in this period is very poor, because neither the existence of statues of some of the well-known Bodhisattvas and Buddhas of Mahāyāna from this period, nor the references in the three Sanskrit inscriptions, nor other available information provides us with details as to the particular philosophical schools and thoughts of Mahāyāna in Ceylon during that time.

The situation is quite different for the third period beginning with the time of King Sena I (833–853), because the historical literature provides us with detailed information for this period which is confirmed by other sources. A rather detailed description of this third period of Mahāyāna in Ceylon can be provided, but this is outside the scope of the present contribution and will be given elsewhere.

NOTES

[1] Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1967), XVI, 135 pp.

[2] S. Paranavitana, "Mahāyānism in Ceylon", *Ceylon Journal of Science*, sect. G, vol. 2 (1928), pp. 35–71.

[3] The quotation is from Diran K. Dohanian, "Mahāyāna Cult in Ancient Ceylon", *India's Contribution to World Thought and Culture, Vivekananda Commemoration Volume* (Madras, 1970), p. 425. Dohanian also repeats other outdated opinions in his contribution.

[4] See Heinz Bechert, "Buddha-Feld und Verdienstübertragung: Mahāyāna-Ideen im Theravāda-Buddhismus Ceylons", *Bulletins de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, Académie Royale de Belgique 5th series, vol. 62. (1976), pp. 27–51.

[5] A survey of such evidence is found in H. Bechert, "*Zur Geschichte der buddhistischen Sekten in Indien und Ceylon*", La Nouvelle Clio, vol. 7–9 (1955–57), pp. 351–357.

[6] D. J. Kalupahana, "Schools of Buddhism in Early Ceylon", *The Ceylon Journal of the Humanities,* vol. 1 (1970), pp. 159–190.

[7] See also H. Bechert, "Buddha-Feld und Verdienstübertragung", loc. cit. (note 6). There I have also discussed Kalupahana's interpretation of the Jetavanārāma Sanskrit inscription.

[8] See Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Opinions sur les relations des deux Véhicules au point de vue du Vinaya", *Bulletins de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, Académie Royale de Belgique, 5th series, vol. 16 (1930), pp. 20–39.

[9] For the *Buddhāpadāna* and its interpretation see my contribution quoted above, note 4.

[10] Paranavitana, loc. cit., p. 46; Mudiyanse, loc. cit., pp. 83 f.

[11] Mudiyanse, loc. cit., pp. 82 f.

[12] S. Paranavitana, in: H. C. Ray (ed.), *University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon*, vol. 1, part 1 (Colombo: Ceylon University Press 1959), p. 380.

[13] S. Paranavitana, "A Note on the Indikaṭusāya Copper Plaques", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 4, pp. 238–242.

[14] Mudiyanse, loc. cit., pp. 90–105.

[15] Tokumyo Matsumoto, *Die Prajñāpāramitā-Literatur* (Stuttgart 1932), pp. 33–35; S. Paranavitana, "Indikaṭusāya Copper Plaques", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 3, pp. 199–212. See Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* ('s-Gravenhage 1960), p. 41.

[16] S. Paranavitana, "Kuccaveli Rock Inscription", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 3, pp. 158–161.

[17] S. Paranavitana, "Tiriyāy Rock Inscription", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. 4, pp. 151–160, and B. Chr. Chhabra, in the same vol., pp. 312–319.

[18] S. Paranavitana, "The Trikayāstava in an Inscription at Mihintale", *Epigraphia Zealanica*, vol. 4, pp. 242–246.